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A CHRONICLE OF FRIENDSHIPS

A CHRONICLE OF FRIENDSHIPS

1873–1900

BY

WILL H. LOW

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE
AUTHOR AND FROM HIS COLLECTIONS

Neque est ullum certius amicitiæ vinculum
Quam consensus et societas consiliorum et voluntatum

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R L

Self-portrait of W. H. L.

Painted in the "vine-trellised arbour" at Montigny, 1870

To B. J. L.

All of which she saw and part of which she was.

W. H. L.

PREFACE

This is a chronicle of small, unimportant happenings. The subsequent importance of one of the young men who figures therein should be, I presume, its best excuse for being; but a truthful portrayal of even his character, as it rises clear in my memory, demands that no more than his then importance should be assigned him. For the keynote of the intercourse of the little band of youths of differing nationalities whom chance threw together in France in the early seventies was a common respect for individual characteristics. Hence this, though largely occupied with two young Scots, cousins, the narrator and others figure therein; and it does not pretend to give to Robert Louis Stevenson the dominant position which he won in later life. To me, even at that time, he was marked with signs of genius, and in the give and take of unconventional intercourse, I think that we would perhaps have given him first place had it ever occurred to make such distinctions; perhaps, I add, for equal suffrage at least would have been accorded to his cousin Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, who in all the qualities of dominating wit, potential in our assembly, where project and purpose outweighed action and accomplishment, outshone us all. In the preface of "Virginibus Puerisque" Stevenson abandons an earlier project of writing a series of papers on "Life at Twenty-five," believing that at thirty odd the time for such a work was past. Rushing where R. L. S. has feared to tread, I might quote Cellini's opening paragraphs in his autobiography, in defence of a project to enregister the events which occupied these years of our youth. For the man past fifty can look back with a certain clearness of vision which is denied him in the years when youth is slipping from his grasp, when each small particle of the careless hours of the primrose

time takes undue proportion in the foreground of the immediate past, and obscures more of the path already trod than it does in the longer perspective of subsequent decades. In any case my recital is one where events, if not more prominent than opinions and belief, have nevertheless the weight of actualities as ballast; it is not the canoe of "sweeter cedar, pithier pine" stored with the fanciful speculations of youth, which R. L. S. would have steered with felicitous touch through the shoals and currents of the halcyon age, but rather the cargo boat, freighted with the memories common to us all, slowly remounting the current to the port of our youth—the current which to so many of us has led on the outward passage to ports beyond human ken, voyages tempestuous in which we have foundered, voyages placid but with baffling calms in sight of port; and above all, as will hereafter appear, small mutinies and great divergence of opinion as to the course to be steered on the part of the inexperienced navigators. Perhaps that which to the writer seemed unwarranted hardship, the forcible separation from the friends of his formative period of character, was a blessing in disguise, for it is certain that our subsequent intercourse ignored the lapse of years, and to meet the two cousins in after life was to resume the thread of existence where we had last dropped it, regardless of all that had occurred in the interval. Hence until the last we breathed the airs of our youth and the hard knocks of later life never sapped the foundation of our castle in Spain. One of the most intimate of the English friends of R. L. S. once told me half jealously that I had had the best of him, inasmuch as our infrequent meetings had established this footing of perennial youth. It is certain that, in so far as I am myself concerned, I established for him in early life a place apart, looking on him as upon an extraneous conscience, a wise youth to whom I could turn, not so much for the solution of knotty questions of conduct, as to an ally in whose company we could judicially discuss the multiple sides of any problem.

We undoubtedly had, to a larger degree than usual, a passion for examining all sides of a question. Hence many divergences of opinion, expressed with vehemence oftentimes, but happily I look back on many years of friendship with the cousins without one shadow of angry dispute. Probably with a common understanding of the inscrutable decrees of destiny we never took our conclusions too seriously. The sense of humour with which the cousins were so liberally endowed I claim to possess in at least a minor degree, and paradox was undoubtedly a recognized fourth in our triune parliament. With this understanding of the ultimately illustrious R. L. S. I have at least been saved the overserious view, which moved another friend of his youth to tear down the beautiful structure of a friendship based upon mutual succour, at a time when both of them needed a friend.

Of the cousins, "Bob," as our affection named him, perhaps less remains save in the memory of a few than of any other man equally gifted. One masterpiece of criticism—the "Art of Velasquez"—and the fugitive contributions to the columns of two critical journals seem little enough to those who knew him. And of the man, I despair at the outset of conveying an adequate impression, for the very variety and brilliancy of his conversation defies registration, and unlike R. L. S. I have few letters in which he has written down his thoughts.

Of the third musketeer, since Dumas' trinity was repeated in our case as it has been so often in the good city of Paris, though I shall spare my reader insistence upon this coincidence, perhaps overmuch may be found here. The narrator, as R. L. S. has again pointed out in the preface to the "Inland Voyage," ofttimes arrogates to himself all the philosophical reflections and leaves to his companion's account all the bad language and questionable action. To tell the tale at all it appears to me in strongly autobiographical guise, for, as I have before said, we were all equal in our relations; and, conse-

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A CHRONICLE OF FRIENDSHIPS

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I

AT NO. 81 ON MOUNT PARNASSUS

WE dwelt on Mount Parnassus. To the outer vision there was no particular reason why the stretch of boulevard, closed at one end by the gilded dome of the tomb of Napoleon and arrested at its intersection with the Boulevard St. Michel by the Observatory before it continued under another name into the *terra incognita* of the regions around the Lyons station, should be known by that name. Nor were we aware of any peculiar significance in the name of the street where we abode, for we were a number of healthy-minded lads, dimly conscious, perhaps, that the course of art and literature in our time was to be directed by us in new and better channels; but this was only when we became, as we phrased it, "deadly serious"; and for the most part poetic aspiration and the dreams of youth were loudly scorned and openly flouted. Chance, and the proximity to the studio of the master under whom we studied, had fixed us in the *Quartier Mont Parnasse*. Of the history of the rather uninteresting boulevard of that name I am quite ignorant. It has still the new look which, by contrast with the older part of Paris, characterizes those portions of the city through which the Baron Haussmann cut his wide avenues. To the left, as one ascends the boulevard, the quarter

is composed of rather narrow and tortuous streets, with sidewalks often shrinking to less than a foothold; in many places long stretches of wall and overhanging trees denote religious houses of many kinds, convents, seminaries and the like, established when the quarter was comparatively open and the country near. To the right lies a medley of populous streets, factories, one of the large cemeteries of Paris, small shops of various descriptions, almost constituting a provincial town apart from Paris—an unlovely agglomeration through which, by Montrouge, Vanves, and Chatillon, we reached the country beyond.

In the time of the heroes of Paul de Kock and of Balzac, and those of Murger as well, the nimble-footed and the giddy-minded sought the Grande Chaumière, in the adjacent street of that name, to dance; and later and until to-day the Closerie des Lilas, better known as the Bullier, is the resort of the frolicsome student—and others—the popular ball of the left bank of the Seine. To-day the Boulevard Mont Parnasse retains an unfinished look, but in 1873, when I first saw it, the trees, recently planted to replace those cut down for firewood in the terrible winter of the Siege, gave scant shade in the midsummer glare, and were tossed and bent like lithe whips by the winter wind. The unpaved walks were dusty in summer and thick with mud in winter for the thinly shod student. A church in course of slow erection was the only considerable building on the street, except the station of the Western Railway and its neighbouring hotel and restaurant—Lavenue's, which honoured name will often appear hereafter. Around and below the station there were numbers of

small restaurants frequented by the *cochers* of the station hacks and, in time of stress, by impecunious students. And then, as now, along the boulevard and in adjacent streets, were many studios. Some of these have since then given place to many-storied apartment houses, having been razed to the ground in their character of one-story buildings, to reappear, transfigured to a higher existence, in the upper stories of these apartment houses. In one instance, however, at No. 81 of the boulevard, there was a building containing many studios, which cannot be spoken of in the past tense, as the interiors of the studios remain very much as they were thirty years ago, though the exterior has been greatly changed. The entrance at that time was down a still-existing blind alley or *impasse*, though since an entrance has been made from the boulevard. The buildings on the left were occupied by various small industries, and on the right a large wooden door opened into a court around which, in two stories, were grouped studios; those for sculptors occupying the ground floor with painters' studios above. At the farther end of the court was a more pretentious construction where *Madame la Propriétaire* lived upon two floors, while the third was covered by a large studio, entered from the alley, occupied in my time as the studio of the pupils of Carolus-Duran, among whom I was numbered. The courtyard, destitute of grass, was littered by large blocks of marble and a few plaster statues, to which their authors, the sculptors residing there, refused the hospitality of their studios on their return from the exhibition at the annual Salon, for which they were created. Prominent among these was

a huge lion, standing guard about midway of the building where the stairway led to the floor above, where, branching to right and left, the hall ran by the doors of the various studios. These varied little in size and consisted of a single room, the wall tinted the colour preferred by the last occupant, sometimes decorated by charcoal or chalk sketches and the scrawled addresses of models.

The rooms were lofty, a huge window occupying the whole of one side about ten feet above the floor, and opposite, at the same height, a platform projected seven or eight feet into the studio, which, reached by a ladder, served as a bedchamber for the bachelor occupant. I have even seen efforts at a *ménage* established on these lofty perches, but these unions were frowned upon by our landlady; for *Madame la Propriétaire* ruled her sometimes unruly tenants with a rod of iron; and as she was a deep-voiced, portly person, possessing a much more vigorous moustache than most of her youthful *locataires*, she was generally obeyed.

The task of government was shared under her orders by the concierge, man and wife. Monsieur and Madame Pavent, as these worthies were named, led an uneasy life. The husband, a small, wiry person of a bilious temperament, may be said to have lived in a state of continual anger, as one constantly commanding and never obeyed. On the other hand there were few orders transmitted by his wife that did not meet with respectful consideration and general obedience. Poor little Monsieur Pavent was probably even then afflicted with the premonitory symptoms of the mania of persecution which finally landed him in an insane

asylum; but it must be owned that a motley assemblage of thirty or forty artists and art students of varying nationalities, dwelling under his jurisdiction, created a potentiality of disturbance trying to a stronger brain than his. Ignoring the cause of his perpetual choler, we looked on him as a petty tyrant, and upon all necessary occasions, to say nothing of those which were less so, we were ready to meet him in battle royal. This was particularly the case at night, when the clang of the bell on the wooden gate at the entrance of the court claimed incessantly admission for some one of the tenants. Fortunately, there was no communication between the lodge and the outer passage by which parley could be held with the belated tenant, or undoubtedly many of us would have slept in the streets.

It was necessary, therefore, each time the bell rang that the door should be opened. Once within the court the stairway leading to the studios was never closed, but few were the occasions when, after giving one's name, according to custom, the voice of Monsieur Pavent was not raised in vituperation of the disreputable scoundrel who would not permit decent people to rest peaceably at night. Those of us to whom French was a foreign tongue owe, I am certain, a debt of gratitude to the irate concierge for an initiation in the idiomatic possibilities of the Billingsgate of that ordinarily polite language; and several of us became past masters in the easy flow of abusive repartee.

The female of this snapping watch-dog was, however, as I have said, held in high esteem, and well she might be, for she was good to look upon, a matronly woman, large without grossness, pleasant voiced, keen,

and firm in the defence of her rights and conciliatory to the rights of others, exacting in her placid firmness good treatment from her overbearing lord; and altogether a fine type of the self-respecting Frenchwoman of the peasant class, seldom found as the guardian of the door in a Parisian house.

The group of artists within the court, however, was neither exclusively foreign nor embryonic. We had one celebrity, Monsieur Perraud, Member of the Institute, sculptor of the closely studied "Infancy of Bacchus," then in the Luxembourg, and at present, now that its author has joined the real Immortals, one of the fine things in the French Sculpture gallery of the Louvre. This good old man had so keen a remembrance of his own student days that he was filled with tolerant charity for the noisy youngsters who were his neighbours, so tolerant, on one occasion, that he sallied forth from his studio on the ground floor and bearded the lioness landlady, who had been called in to settle a dispute between Monsieur Pavent and a youth guilty of the crime of playing the banjo after midnight in the moonlit court. I can see him yet as I looked from my upper window, in his velvet skull-cap and gray workman's vest, on which shone the red rosette of the officer of the Legion of Honour, as he temperately argued with the lady that boys would be boys, and that for foreigners we were not as bad as we might be—though he owned that he thought our national instrument "*épouvantable*." Again I witnessed meetings between him and his old friend Cabanel, who, as the master of one of the *ateliers* of the National École des Beaux-Arts was endowed in our

student eyes with an even greater measure of dignity than the ordinary member of the Institute, and listened to the "thee" and "thou" of their intimate friendship; the *tutoiement* which, born of the student days, lasts through life between former comrades. A third remembrance arises as I recall the sad face of Cabanel, standing in company with his fellow Academicians in the palm-embroidered green coats of their ceremonial dress, their cocked hats doffed, by the newly made grave of Perraud in the cimetière Montparnasse; at the parting of the way they had long trod together.

Of other French neighbours in the court I remember one, now a well-known living sculptor, who at that time had just received his first medal in the Salon. It is the custom for the recipients of these honours to make a formal call upon each member of the jury, and on such visits a high hat must of necessity be worn. I had early learned that, however eccentric one's costume as a student might be, a high hat, however shabby, covered a multitude of sartorial sins. Contumely visited upon a sealskin cap which the winter before my arrival in Paris had been a not unfashionable head-covering in New York, had taught me a lesson which resulted in the adoption of the high-crowned, straight-brimmed headgear, which from the time of John Leech, if not before, has been popular in Paris. Worn at all times, in all weathers, my hat would not in any other quarter have excited envy. But my friend, the sculptor, who had confided to me that to receive a medal would mean for him an extension of credit at the restaurant and a new hat like mine, had been apparently half rewarded;

for, passing through the court one day, I was called into his studio, and in view of the absolute necessity of the official visits he explained that he must borrow my hat. He proffered his own in temporary exchange, a most lamentable covering; originally black, it had passed through different gradations of tone until it was a dingy yellow brown. It was of the soft variety, with a flapping brim, and so large that its passage from the top of my head to my shoulders was only intercepted by my ears. My own hat perched jauntily on the apex of my friend's curling locks and, thus arrayed, he sallied forth for the day on his ceremonial visits. Instead of one day, the visits, and doubtless various appropriate celebrations of the honour received, lasted four days. Much of this time I sought the seclusion of my studio, where I could hide the hated object from my sight, but hunger drove me from my den at least twice a day, when my appearance was such that the whole populace of the quarter gave itself up to unlimited joy. At the end of the fourth day my friend reappeared, but his assurance that my kindness had insured his whole future was but slight balm for the wounds of my dignity.

The foreign element within our court was almost exclusively English or American. Upon the right of the entrance was a small detached building; the ground floor the lair of the concierge, while the upper contained two studios, to one of which was attached a real bedroom and a small kitchen. This luxury of the one studio was compensated by the penury of the other, which lacked even the *soupente*, or projecting platform, already described. There was, however, a

shallow cupboard occupying space over the stairway by which the studio was reached, and this was utilized by one of my friends of small stature, who at night opened his cupboard doors and stretched himself upon a mattress placed on one of the shelves. As the cupboard had two doors closing on an upright bar in the middle, a certain snake-like suppleness was demanded to enter into the improvised bedroom; but, as my comrade remarked, the upright was an effectual preventive against rolling out of bed. This was at a later period than that of which I now write, however; at this time the larger of these studios was occupied by my friend Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, and the smaller by Henry Enfield. It is with a feeling akin to inditing a notice for the "Personal" column of a newspaper—"if this should meet the eye of," etc.—that I write this name because of the many years that its bearer, one of the intimates of our little group, has been lost to sight. Readers of the "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" will recall the name, described as that of the "well-known man about town" who was the friend of Mr. Utterson. Stevenson's phrase describes the superficial appearance of our old friend, whose great stature, broad shoulders, ruddy complexion and broad wave of blonde beard, combined with the use of the single eyeglass, made him the typical Briton of the type then in fashion. He was much more than this, however. Loving the sea, he had voyaged far and near, and with a charming sense of colour and great knowledge of the structure and rigging of vessels and of the forms of wave-torn water, seemed destined to be a great marine painter. He was our comrade in the atelier Duran, with frequent absences,

from which he returned with a patina of bronze on his ruddy cheeks and new tales of the sea.

What caprice of the Fates, which determine and sometimes divert our destinies, has led him to desert his early vocation and devote his talents to the fabrication of mediæval saints in stained glass at Düsseldorf, is unknown to me; as I know only of this later phase of his career through hearsay; but, I venture to believe from his early promise, that his work must be better than the dreary generality of German glass.

There were others within the quadrangle who, united in our common pursuit, aided by the freedom of intercourse prevalent among young men detached from association with home and family, were bound by ties of intimate association. Lapse of years and divergency of local habitation has dispersed these men, in the cases where the Great Destroyer has stayed his hand. In the five years of my tenancy of one or the other of these studios I saw each year new arrivals; succeeding generations it seemed at the time, so great was the separation between the *nouveau* and the *ancien;* and many of these men are now in the ranks of our current art production here, in England, and in France. Among the new arrivals one year was Theodore Robinson, who, timidly, with due respect for my two years' experience in Paris student life, sought my acquaintance; and an intimacy of closest friendship was established, which only ceased with his death in 1896. One other, a soft-voiced, gentle youth from a Southern State, was with us a couple of years, sharing Robinson's studio, until suddenly recalled by some reverse of family fortune. We little thought, in our daily intercourse, that

under the placid surface of his modest self-effacement the fires of volcanic passion smouldered. But in the course of time, in his native town, to which he returned, his work brought him recognition, and he sought, in the awakened interest which his presence inspired, to establish an art school. Pupils came to him, and with their progress the necessity of working from the living model became manifest. This feature of his teaching, to him a simple question of his craft, became, in the community where he lived, a question of morals. Argument waxed high, the local press took up the question, families were divided upon it, and through it all the painter, unable to grasp the significance of the dissension, kept steadily to his purpose, followed by his few adherents. At last the quarrel reached a point where innate savagery broke through the crust of reasonable argument, and the young painter went to the door of his chief opponent prepared to settle this question of art by the antique appeal to arms. His opponent was the quicker and, in the vernacular of the section, drew his gun first; and this question and all others were settled forever for our whilom comrade.

Many and various as were the characters of the youths sojourning at eighty-one, as we phonetically designated our place of abode, most of us were joined in common loyalty to the atelier Duran which, as I have already mentioned, occupied the third floor of part of the buildings congregated around the court, and here for half the day our lives were spent in study.

II

L'ATELIER DES ÉLÈVES DE MONSIEUR CAROLUS-DURAN

THE legend above was inscribed on the door in the passageway outside the court, which opened on the winding stair leading to the upper floor, where a small anteroom led into the spacious and well-lit studio where we studied. The miscreant was never discovered who, with an assiduity worthy of a better cause, added with chalk from time to time a final "D" to the name of our master, and sought to perpetuate the legend that his name was the over-common one of Durand, which in French vies in popularity with the name of Smith with us. One of the duties of the massier—the mace-bearer, *i. e.*, the elected monitor of the school—was to carefully efface this added letter each week before the visit of the master. Before this door, which officially opened for work a few minutes before eight each morning, were gathered at a much earlier hour every Monday the majority of the youths who by name or description will figure in this narrative. The reason for our early appearance was the custom of allowing each student, in the order of his arrival, to choose the position which he preferred before the model for his study of the week. More than once in those days, when to waste the nights in slumber seemed injudicious, has the writer or some of his comrades returned home to doze in an armchair by the smouldering

Carolus-Duran in 1874.

studio fire, until the short interval should elapse when the adjacent school door would open to secure a good position for work. In these days, when our master has achieved nearly all the honour which France bestows on a successful painter, when, as President of the National Society of Fine Arts, Member of the Institute, and Director of the Academy of France at Rome, his authority is no longer questioned, it is a far call to the early seventies when the Institute, still implacable, and the majority of the eminent painters then in vogue looked upon him as a dangerous innovator, whose personal product might with reason be considered interesting, but whose teachings were to be avoided. From the enthusiasm of a youth from Boston, Robert C. Hinckley, now a successful portrait painter in Washington, the *atelier Duran* had its birth. Mr. Hinckley, arriving in Paris with the intention of studying art, had been greatly impressed by Duran's work and sought his instruction as a private pupil. M. Duran declined to admit a pupil into his private studio, but offered, if Hinckley would find a room near by and work from life, to visit him and correct his work occasionally. This he did, and before long a second applicant for the privilege of study was referred to Hinckley by the master, soon followed by others. When I joined the atelier there were eight or ten pupils, perhaps half being French, and in the years following the number rose to forty, the majority then being English or American. The official language of the school remained French, however, a placard announcing a fine of ten centimes for each word of a foreign tongue being conspicuous on the walls; a fine, curiously enough, more often

imposed on our French comrades, proud of the few words of English which they possessed than upon those to whom it was the native tongue. The vogue of an atelier in Paris then or now is not altogether due to the popularity of the master's work. Perhaps no deep-settled conviction as to the pre-eminence of a master presides at their foundation, but so loyal is youth, so tenacious of newly acquired beliefs, and so enthusiastic in conforming to them, that soon after their entrance into the ranks of a given atelier the students evince a remarkable *esprit du corps* and can see but little salvation outside of their chosen path. Such, at least, was the *atelier Duran*, and we had need of our convictions, for we were classed as outlaws by the conservative pupils of the government schools, and even the independent atelier of M. Bonnat looked askance on the newcomer. It differed indeed in one particular from all the other schools of Paris. Our master adopted a principle, admirable in its logic, yet seductive to the young painter anxious to scale the painful ascent of the ladder of art at a bound.

The ordinary methods of instruction in art divide drawing from painting, and further subdivide drawing into drawing from the plaster cast and from life. The evident reason for thus attacking the problems of artistic production *seriatim* is not to confuse the student with form and colour at the same time. The disadvantage of such a method lies in the danger in after work of continuing this subdivision and producing tinted drawings instead of the fully coloured, freely drawn products of the brush, which is the final instrument of the painter. It is equally evident that by giv-

ing the neophyte the task of reproducing in colour and form the ever-changing living model his difficulties are multiplied manifold. But this is more or less unknown to the unpracticed beginner, and the charm of arriving at once at the point held in reserve during long years of study in other schools overbalances any feeling of timidity which he may have. The struggles of one who cannot swim and who is thrown into deep water are nothing, however, compared with the floundering in colour and shapeless form which characterize the first studies according to this method. Logical rectitude reinforced by the example of the great Velasquez are but feeble props for the despairing student struggling in the mesh of overpowering difficulty. Hence there were frequent departures from our ranks, and many a defeated painter found it expedient to become an humble draughtsman in the halls of antique sculpture of the École des Beaux Arts. The grave M. Bouguereau was quoted as asking one of our comrades, "Does M. Duran ever make you draw?" and Ingres's axiom that drawing is the probity of art was repeated to us on all occasions by students of rival ateliers solicitous of our welfare.

Given, however, a sufficiently eclectic appreciation of the qualities of form and colour which make a work of art, and a nature not to be baffled by a mulitiplication of difficulites at the outset, this method of study has its advantages. It keeps ever present in the student's mind the final end to be attained, and the incessant use of the brush, with its implied rendition of form and colour by masses and planes which exist before his eyes, rather than by the point and masses of black and white tones

which are the necessary conventions of the usual method, gives him a mastery of his tools which is superior and, as I have already repeated, is absolutely logical. Joined to a sincere and stimulating enthusiasm as a teacher, our master showed great perception and consideration for the individual temperament of his pupils; and I have known him to recommend diametrically opposite courses to different men, as he judged might be useful to one or the other.

As temperament varies in different painters, greater or less stress is laid by them upon qualities of form or colour, and there were men in Duran's who drew well and have since continued to do so, and, despite the heresies of our youthful career in the estimation of academical Paris, few of the ateliers of the time have turned out men of more renown to-day in the various branches of art.

It was our privilege a few years ago, on the occasion of a visit to this country by M. Duran, to assemble in New York, without going farther afield than Boston, a round dozen of his former pupils at dinner at one of the clubs. Most of us were sufficiently mature, and more or less known, but we were all heartily glad to join in rendering honour to one to whom we owed so much.

The atelier was organized on a democratic basis, all students paying a certain amount each month, which went for the expenses of rent, heating, and the hire of models; our master giving gratuitously, in the service of art and in gratitude for similar gratuitous instruction received in his youth, his services two mornings of every week. This was no light sacrifice of the time of

a busy portrait-painter and, but little later, the service given was increased by visits to our own studios; when we were preparing pictures for the Salon, when he was ever willing to counsel and help us. The internal government of the studio was vested in our *massier*, one of our now well-known painters in New York occupying that monitory position, and ruling us with an energy on a par with our openly expressed disregard for all rule. The models were chosen by vote, and I can remember a long succession of these faithful servitors of art coming week after week for our suffrages, and taking their positions on the platform for our judgment, in the intervals of repose of the model from whom we were working. They were of all types, ages, and of colour, I might say, for the Negro and the Arab were of the number. We had the model of long experience who had posed for this or that picture or statue in the Louvre, where works of art are never placed until ten years after the death of their author; and who openly criticised our inexperience in posing a model, or deplored our modern distaste for the conventional pose; "which was given me, Messieurs, by no less a person than Monsieur Ingres in 1856!" We had the père Gélon, the père Lambert (who, dying, left all his little fortune for the benefit of young painters entered in the competition for the Prix du Rome, in order that they might employ models as much as necessary), the brawny Schlumberger, and the Herculean Thullier, and others, whose names were familiar to all students at that time in Paris. Many were the tales these veterans told of the great men they had served, and eager listeners were we, who strove to

follow in their footsteps. Among the women models there were fewer veterans, or probably our favouring votes preferred feminine beauty less mature, though I remember the pretence of one damsel in her teens that she had posed for the *Sapho* of Pradier, who had then been dead more years than she had lived. But to them all, hardworking through a few years at most, the precariously paid servants of a precarious trade, a figure painter would be ill inspired if he did not feel a sincere good fellowship and hearty gratitude. I have known them uncomplainingly to pose without hire, every available moment that could be snatched from their paid labour, for some poor fellow ambitious to finish a picture for the Salon, or to give credit far beyond their means to those bent to the same task and unable to pay for the moment. Being but mortal, and having more than ordinary temptation, they have their faults; but the studio walls see many little kindnesses from artist to model and model to artist, and the relation between them, though one of circumstance and chance, and moreover absolutely misunderstood outside the limits of their crafts, has many unwritten histories which do credit to both.

Some of the older models, as I have said, were filled with the traditions of their glorious past, and I call to mind one of our comrades who, having made a study for an ambitious composition representing Alexander ordaining the burning of his palace at the termination of a feast, called upon père Gélon as the model for his principal figure. But, after a long and careful inspection of the composition sketch, Gélon nobly refused to take the pose therein indicated: "Not thus," quoth the

The "Massier"

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père Gélon, "does a king ordain the burning of his palace, but in this manner," giving a pose inspired by the Oath of the Horatii by David. And in no other way would he pose, and the submissive artist was forced to accept the hackneyed attitude; not at all to the advantage of his picture.

Another figure which rises from the memory of the old atelier is Paul, known as Van Eyck, from his fancied physical resemblance to the early painter of that name. Paul was the colourman who every Monday morning appeared in the ante-room of the atelier with a supply of colours, brushes, and canvas of the required sizes, for our academic studies. A Norman of the most indefatigable good nature, Paul, in the highest favour of us all, was then in the employ of another, but many of us have lived to see and rejoice in his establishment as a dealer on his own account; and even to see him, still comparatively young, retire from business with a little fortune, and divide his prosperous colour business between his son and daughter, who, married in their turn, now make the business in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs suffice for their respective ménages. To Paul Foinet and to Madame Foinet, his wife, a whole generation of customers since my time have become friends. Working at their trade Madame Foinet was ensconced behind the counter, with a mirror conveniently placed so she could watch the movements of the workmen laboriously grinding colours by hand in the inner room—"for, you see," she explained, "in order to make the work easier *ces gens sans conscience* bring little vials of oil in their pockets to add to the just amount which we give them." And here she kept

the books and attended to customers through the day. Meanwhile Paul would shoulder his heavy box of colours and trudge to the different studios of his clients, where, with a cheery word, not disdaining a bit of gossip, he was always welcome. Extending a credit virtually unlimited, this worthy couple have amassed a little fortune with few bad debts, though in many cases they have had to wait long for the settlement of an account. "Where we have lost," they say, "it is generally because death has come before success." I have known Madame Foinet to hire a studio, supply materials and pay for models for a young artist of talent, and, since the influx in these later years of young women art students, many of our young girl compatriots have reason for gratitude to this kind woman, who has seen to getting fitting lodgings, and has counselled them wisely in their ignorance of custom, to say nothing of selling them honest colours on long credits. They number, not as clients merely, but as friends, many of the most eminent French artists, and the writer feels justified in this digression to describe two of a class of Old World tradespeople for whose character and position we have no counterpart here. It would indeed be base ingratitude to do less, for, on my many visits to Paris, it has been a pleasure to alight at 54 Rue Notre Dame des Champs to shake the hands extended in welcome; and often, in the little back shop, share a good dinner and a so excellent bottle of wine that it is difficult to believe that my friend Paul was brought up in Normandy, where they drink cider. The old trade-mark—*Foinet, dit Van Eyck*—has disappeared from the backs of the canvases,

and is replaced by that of the younger generation; to which I wish equal success, and to the continuance of whose trade, in their respective shops, I am pleased to give all the publicity possible.

Our revolutionary atelier was, in point of fact, one of the quietest places of study in Paris. The horseplay of initiation, dangerous to life and limb, and occasionally to the self-respect of the new pupil, which was the tradition of an earlier day, was in little favour in any of the studios; but in ours, with the preponderance of the Anglo-Saxon element which had no such tradition, there were no ceremonies of any kind, save that it was considered proper for the newcomer to "treat the crowd." This was a modest ceremony, often carried out at the midday adjournment to a neighbouring restaurant, so that we exemplary youths might not lose time at our morning's work. Naturally, where twenty-five or thirty were gathered together, there was occasionally found one who decided that it was not his year for work, and who required instant, vigorous, but kindly remonstrance if he interfered with the industrious. One of our number, who was gifted with a remarkable musical sense, and who was, moreover, rather *mondain* in his tastes, would bring back from his excursions to the theatres across the Seine, where we seldom ventured, memories of the Offenbach operettas, then much in vogue, which he would mimic for our benefit in a surprising manner. He apparently remembered the whole orchestral score and the major part of the libretto, and often a morning would go by, to the accompaniment of our work, while this solo performer would give us the whole of "La Belle Hélène"

or "La Perichole." Memories of other schools lead me to believe that our perplexities were greater by the use of colour from the outset, in pursuance of our master's theories, than if we had worked with charcoal in monotone. It is certain that work was unrelenting and, until the later days of the school, no one was sufficiently proficient in his task to spare time for play. The humorous passages were in a minor key, as when a late comer opening the door said, with profound politeness, in French: "Gentlemen, I have the honour to salute you!" No answer to this for several minutes, work going on methodically meanwhile, then from a far corner a voice piped: "The honour is ours." Silence once more for an appreciable time and then, gravely resuming the situation, from another corner came, "The honour is shared by all"; while the work went on.

But if little riotous conduct found favour, one of my old comrades must still remember that on one occasion, after a spasmodic attempt at modelling in clay in the *atelier Duran*, there had remained a large sponge immersed in a bucket of clay-stained water. One morning, as one of the men had gone into the anteroom for some purpose, my facetious friend took this sponge and, seated on a high stool before the door, announced loudly his intention of "letting 'Becky' have it" when he entered. The door opened, and he flung the sponge. But it was not the comrade; it was our master, brave in the blue velvet coat and yellow silk shirt which he then affected. The aim was true, and for a horrid moment no one knew what was about to happen. Then the master withdrew, closing the

door after him, and another time of suspense followed, no one speaking, and the unwilling culprit seeking his easel in sheer despair. Then the door reopened, the master, his disorder repaired by the aid of our friend who had remained in the anteroom, appeared, and by a few sensible words brought the guilty to a stammering apology and an assurance that the unlucky sponge was intended for a fellow student. Our master, upon occasion the very embodiment of high-strung pride, won our hearts that day by proceeding quietly with the lesson, and left us with an added measure of respect for him.

Much discussion on many subjects we had during the hours of work, and in the intervals of the ten minutes' rest which each hour was accorded our model, various gymnastic exercises were indulged in. But my chief recollection is that of hard work, of much perplexity, and a deep-seated despair as we surveyed our studies in comparison with the living model before us. I also remember keenly the helpful and frank criticism we gave each other, and I realize that in the common emulation and effort at the attainment of the same object lies the chief value of atelier work. The criticisms of a master are of great value, but are necessarily general in character; the example of he, who by your side is doing perhaps a little better than you in rendering the task before you, constitutes the little step of progress which you can hope to make. Velasquez shines on a height far above you, unattainable, yet the first round of the ladder has been cleared by Sargent at your side—surely I may use my old comrade's name, even in his present eminence, in this connection—and

you may follow. Many of our men, before a year after the atelier opened, had made such progress that our master's principles were vindicated; and though, in the four or five years where I was a more or less diligent student—for in the latter time my presence was intermittent—I never made a study that seemed to me worth keeping, I have since realized how much I owe to my studies in the *atelier Duran*.

III.

R. A. M. S.

IN the second year of the *atelier Duran*, in 1874, there came, after a sojourn at Antwerp, where the art schools had not met his approval, a new addition to our ranks. Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, whose many names were soon shortened to Bob, was a man five or six years older than most of us, a difference of age which, when one is barely arrived at majority, means much. He was, moreover, a university man, having gone through Cambridge; with what honour I know not, and his humour was such that he would never disclose. Judging from my after knowledge, his university years must have been given to the acquirement of much odd knowledge outside of the regular course. He could be earnest enough and a sedulous scholar, but I cannot imagine restraint sufficient to keep him in a beaten track; he must have strayed hither and yon as de did in our Paris days—indeed, to the end of his life.

The intimacies of youth are often the offshoot of propinquity and circumstance. In that careless time one can dwell, more than half contentedly, in the common pursuits of school or pleasure with those whose natures may be most at variance with our own, and so uncritical and lacking in judgment is youth that we are often drawn by superficial affinities to those who, in more mature years, we would recognize at once as

unfitted for intimate commerce. Equally true is it that in youth we have strange, unfounded antipathies; our future friend wears his hat askew or parts his hair in a manner unsympathetic, and we view him with prejudiced eyes. Something like this last occurred with Bob, and there grew up at once a strange situation of which I found myself the centre. I must first explain that, though in the *atelier Duran*, I was not altogether of it. The necessity of making a living had taken me from my birthplace to New York in my seventeenth year. There, favoured by the extremely small demands which illustration at that time made in the way of artistic attainment, I had managed to live by the meagre resources of my art. Finding few of my age to consort with, I became the associate of men and women very much my seniors. I was probably tolerably precocious and, as it now appears, I must certainly have been absurdly morbid, for I took an exaggerated view of the gravity of life, which seemed to me, in view of the extremely unsuccessful use which most of my associates had made of it, to be hardly worth living. In a word, I had a veneer of vicarious worldly experience, which I had accepted as it was given me, when a chance occurred for me to go abroad to study my art. This was to open new horizons and introduce me to an existence at once broader and more sympathetic. New York, or at least my personal environment, had been intensely provincial, and the larger freedom and nobler aims of Paris soon cleared the mists of doubt, which were probably in part due to the physical development of my age.

Before my departure I had at least one wise in-

spiration, for, though guiltless of knowledge of French or of France, I felt that to profit by my sojourn there I must know the language and the people. The sculptor, Olin L. Warner, whose too early death by accident in 1896 was a most serious loss to our art, had then recently returned from study in France, and in our talks together I learned from him the mistake which so many of our compatriots make when in Paris of seeking only the society of their compatriots, ignoring the language and life of France and shrouding themselves with a dense mist of prejudice which allows no ray of the vast intellectual light of the country to penetrate. To avoid this danger I adopted a Spartan course. I took with me from Warner letters to some of his French comrades; letters which I could not read to men who, with one exception, could speak no English. He who could speak English was good enough on my arrival to see me safely lodged in a furnished room in a house where I was the only American; and then, with my other letters, I threw myself on the mercy of my friend's comrades. They were young sculptors, already through with their school studies; and the kindness with which they took me in hand, convoyed me to their restaurants and ordered my food, bore with my pantomimic efforts at expression, and initiated me into the life of a Paris student, with infinite patience and good nature, defies expression even at this late day, though my gratitude has grown with my years. The first effect of this was, naturally enough, a militant approval of France and things French. When, after a brief period in Gérôme's atelier in the École des Beaux-Arts, whence I was driven by a short illness, I was

tempted to enter the *atelier Duran*, rather for the better air and less crowded condition of the studio than by convincing admiration for my proposed master's work, I found myself, or imagined myself, in the presence of the danger which I wished to avoid, as the studio was essentially American. Hence while I worked there I rather avoided the society of my comrades out of school hours, refusing to accompany them to the restaurants where they most resorted, and comporting myself generally as one who would avoid their company. I had therefore but little illusion as to my popularity in the class, and the few Frenchmen who were our fellow-students, as their after careers have proved, were neither intelligent nor interesting. The Anglo-Saxon, however, dominated in the atelier and, after the manner of his kind, with the arrogance and self-sufficiency which earns him, wherever he penetrates, open hatred and grudging admiration. For myself, in my two years' hard struggle in New York, I had at least learned a certain charity for those who differed with me, and had shed some of the youthful intolerance which sees no further than the shadow of its own church spire.

He who seeks to conciliate international misunderstandings, firmly set upon the foundations of the Tower of Babel, has a hard lot. In my own case, among my French comrades I was accused of flaunting the flag of my country, *à tort et à travers*, on all occasions, and in the atelier I was believed to have sold my birthright as a citizen of our proud Republic for a mess of French pottage—the savoury quality of which, by a last injustice and a memory of home larders, my opponents were prepared to deny. Therefore when, in the ab-

sence of this newcomer to our ranks—for Bob was rather an idle apprentice and his place was often vacant—I took up his defence, it did not help his case. "'E's a stranger, 'eave 'arf a brick at 'im" not inaptly describes his reception among us. He brought a new variety of difference of opinion, and forced our close corporation to new and novel modes of defence, which sorely tried the dominant government of the transplanted oasis set in the desert of Continental custom. The broad sympathies, the opinions based on an already wide experience, backed by a store of acquired knowledge which no other one of us possessed, expressed inimitably; for his genius (no other word suffices) for talk was greater than I have known in any man, dispensed with aid when he was present. Not that his talk was controversial; it began on a plane far above argument; with careless generosity granting all that you would give your life blood to maintain, and then by twist and turn, with an apparent and honest intent not to dismiss the smallest subject before every phase of it was carefully examined, your premises would suddenly give way and the principles of years would lie in ruins at your feet; while, guided by his skilful hand, you soared the blue empyrean of speculative thought. From our accepted point of view, that to our human ant-hill each insect must add his grain of sand as an excuse for existence, it is regrettable that no one, of the many who have listened spellbound to this rare genius, can adequately record enough of his conversation to prove the work—I use the word advisedly—which this man did in the world. The gift of his cousin, the well-loved R. L. S.,

was both greater and less. His talk, shorn of much of its exuberance, compressed to solidity, and in the process becoming tangible, lives for us on the printed page. He had the more common endowment of the artist, a joy in his craft, the necessity of basing on a lump of clay the chiselled work of art. In this he was of the company of writers, sculptors and painters, the perfect fruit of civilization, if you will, but of this earth earthy; capable of classification and ordered comparison and, in a world where beauty is use, greater by far than the gift of the less definable cousin Bob was akin to music, the art which, reproducing nothing, based on naught that is tangible, is yet capable of awakening chords untouched by painting, sculpture, or literature. In an imaginary republic of Art and Letters he would have found a place where his gift of stimulating sympathetic intelligences would have given him a position among the most useful of its citizens. For what may seem his cheerful pessimism to a superficial view had in reality nothing of the doctrine of *cui bono*, which is the base of pessimism. On the contrary, I have never known a spirit more appreciative and hopefully judicious than his, and numbers of men, borne down far more than he in the despair of doing aught that will command success, yet painfully toiling to add their mite to the world's accretion, know deep in their hearts how much they owe to his wise counsel and discriminating encouragement in giving them hope for renewed effort. In the earlier years of their inseparable intimacy, the elder of the cousins was of incalculable help to the younger, as R. L. S. loyally proclaimed on all occasions.

Little of all this was of course evident when this tempest burst in the teapot of our school-room. Only the small change of Bob's wealth of conversational power rattled among us, but the effect upon a troop of healthy young human animals who had never begun to think, but who, in the intervals of strenuous endeavour to acquire some knowledge of a difficult trade, had settled most of the important questions of art and morals to their self-complacent satisfaction, can be imagined. As I had been the chief dissenter up to the time of his arrival I should at once have looked upon him as an ally, but that my own intellectual independence, so far as it had gone, was not wholly exempt from the "homely wit" with which we, all "home-keeping youths," were tainted. But, after a few preliminary skirmishes, a tacit agreement was reached that the newcomer was not to be aroused, and in his presence dangerous subjects were avoided. No sooner did he absent himself, however, than the silenced tongues found voice. His work was voted to be merely tentative, and was passed over lightly; for a sincere respect for the art in whose difficulties we all floundered was a notable and noble feature of our little band. No such suspension of verdict applied to his character and principles, however, and with a natural indignation at attacks on one who was not there to defend himself I took up his quarrel. I do not wish to exaggerate either the seriousness of the attack nor the bravery of the defence; it was all, as I have said before, of the tempest and teapot order; but from weeks of more or less good-natured attack and parry I emerged as the constituted champion and

intimate friend of one who, out of school, I seldom saw and never sought. Nor, as I found afterward, was Bob conscious of the situation thus created, for during this time he had no more interest in me than I in him. Indeed, there was more than that on my side, either because I was disaffected by the criticisms of my opponents, or from the enigmatic quality which the man himself presented. In either case the winter wore on, and more than once I remember to have crossed a street to avoid meeting my comrade of the morning, and my future friend, and the summer of 1874 came. The previous year, a few months after my arrival in France, I had gone to a little village near the border of the forest of Fontainebleau, intending to spend the summer vacation. I had heard of Barbizon as the resort of many American students and, in my early resolve to see all that I could of the people of France and to avoid my compatriots, I had determined to find a place for myself. By a roundabout route I had chanced upon the little hamlet of Recloses, about fifteen miles from Barbizon on the other side of the forest. Here I had stopped in a miserable apology for an inn, with no other company than that of peasants, whose one relaxation from toil was poaching in the neighbouring forest. For about a week a desperately homesick boy struggled with these conditions until his resolution gave out. On a beautiful morning, consulting Denincourt's map, I made my way through the forest, and by noon was seated at the hospitable board of the Hotel Siron in Barbizon, shamelessly glad to be able to express myself freely in my native tongue, and from that time forth for many years Barbizon was to

be the spot where I felt myself the most at home. I only waited for the closing of the Duran school for the midsummer season to return to Barbizon the following year, and here shortly after Bob Stevenson came one evening by Lejosnes' yellow coach, which was then our only link with the railway at Melun. This was the first year that saw the influx of Hungarian, German, and Swedish painters at Barbizon, and the table d'hôte was polyglot and noisy. Siron's hotel was built around a court, a rambling structure giving evidence of gradual growth and added construction as necessity had arisen. The dining-room looked on the village street and was panelled with wood, on which all my and the preceding generation had painted rather indifferent sketches. Long tables ran around three sides of this room, a piano which was inured to hard usage was in one corner, and a fireplace in the other. For the modest sum of five francs a day augmented occasionally by "estrats," as the mysterious spelling of our host had it, we were furnished with very good food and lodging. As the hotel proper had limited accommodation the lodgers overflowed to various peasant houses, as well as to an annex which contained studios as well as bedrooms which Siron had caused to be built across the street. Munkacsy was there, in the flush of his first success in the Salon, as was Libermann, a German Jew, with blue-black beard and a marvellous facility for painting in two or three different styles; in one of which he has since acquired great reputation; Gaston Guinard, then a young man of fortune enjoying himself in the society of artists until, through sheer force of example, he began to paint, who has since become a

noted animal painter; Olivier de Penne, a relic of the days of the court of the Second Empire at Fontainebleau, witty and cynical, openly regretting the Bonaparte dynasty, apparently never at work, yet producing constantly pictures of surprising numbers and merit; Hill, a Swede, whose motto, "*il faut faire de la beindure nouvelle*," as he pronounced it, became a byword with us and whose talent was such that, but for his early death, he would undoubtedly have done painting that was both novel and convincing; all these and many more were gathered around the tables at Siron's that summer. Ridgway Knight and Henry Bacon, then and still domiciled in France, were there; Peppercorn and Johnson, since well known in England, Wyatt Eaton, Stevenson, myself, and a few others, made up the English-speaking contingent. The early morning saw us all astir, and a generous bowl of coffee and a bit of bread under the arbour at the back of the hotel having been disposed of, we separated to our work. Those who went far into the forest took a lunch with them, the others, working on the plain or in the peasants' houses in the village, met again at noon. But it was about sunset that one by one we entered the courtyard, shifted our loads of painting materials from our shoulders to the ground, and placed our freshly painted studies against the wall of the house. Then would come an hour of mutual criticism of our work, as seated at little round tables, conveniently placed, we absorbed various "estrats" in the guise of vermouth, or strolled from one canvas to the other. Many a helpful word came at these times, criticisms and suggestions as various as the nationalities represented;

and the cheerful witticism was by no means debarred. Indeed, one such word I remember, as applied to a semi-decorative attempt of my own, where my love for the primitive masters in the Louvre had ill inspired me. One of our number was a young Indianian, John Love by name. Love is of the number whose early death makes these recollections read like a mortuary record; but I can see him now, lank of limb and fair of feature, with kindly eyes, as he surveyed my performance and then, with a native drawl said: "If I were you, I'd change my style, or *learn how to draw*." I am glad to say that my sense of humour was sufficient to permit me to translate into our common tongue of communication this discomfiting appreciation, and to join in the laugh it excited by its aptness.

Some of the men, however, had been to see me, Munkacsy especially, who with native impetuousness had complimented me far beyond my deserts; and some echo of this had reached Bob Stevenson. He that summer had done work much superior to the few studies painted in the Duran atelier; work which I remember was hailed by the Swedish exponent of "*la beindure nouvelle*," Hill, as of great promise. Hill's own work was good enough to make his approval valuable, and one of Bob's studies, especially, comes back to me as having something of the novelty of composition and brilliancy of colour, which only became the property of the modern painter at the first comprehensive exhibition of the Impressionists two years later. In writing of Bob I am speaking of an unsuccessful painter, one who after years of discouragement, even from those who would have better liked to

praise, virtually relinquished the brush and all unwillingly took up the pen. I cannot pretend to have followed his work, for during the period of his struggle we were on opposite sides of the Atlantic, and consequently I only knew of his ultimate trial and his failure by report. Assiduity in these early days was absent from his effort, the spectacle of the world then, as later, holding first possession of his nature; and intermittence of effort is as great an enemy as the painter, young or old, can encounter. But this alone is not enough to explain my friend's failure as a painter; for many as idle as he have, through encouragement, acquired industry. It must be remembered that painting at that time, at least in France, was singularly oblivious of the charm of colour. Efficiency in drawing, often lacking in style but aiming at veracity, and a close attention to values, as the qualities of light and dark resident in each and every tone (not light and shade, chiaroscuro, which is an entirely different thing), are technically known, constituted the chief equipment of the painter. Of colour, *per se*, either in its realistic aspect in rendering nature or in its decorative quality, little was said, even by Duran, in his instruction; and in the production of the time the same lack is evident. Stevenson's gift as a painter, in so far as he was gifted, was in the direction of colour; and I remember certain studies where it seemed to me that he had developed the latent colour of the objects represented to a quite remarkable degree. Work much later of his, which I have seen, had these same qualities overemphasized until they became the defect of his merit, but I have always felt that under conditions more sympathetic

than he found after his return to England, something would have resulted from this quality, which, at the period I speak of, few of his comrades shared in any considerable degree. Sincerely admiring much that he did as a painter, though our chance meetings at Siron's table d'hôte had not as yet vanquished the vague prejudice I felt for the man, I was flattered when one day he asked permission to come to my room and see my summer's work. This was quite at the end of the season, most of our gay company had dispersed, and we were left, half a dozen or so belated in the effort to finish work, before we in turn took flight.

Little incidents take disproportionate size in retrospect. The courtesies prevailing in our motley assemblages were of the slightest, the many varying forms of good manners, proper to our various countries, had been simplified to a species of Volapûk, which sufficed; and, as usual, by far the least courteous of the number were the English and Americans.

I was therefore quite unprepared for the extremely courteous, though not in the least formal, manner in which Stevenson asked this slight privilege of inspecting my work. I saw afterward many examples of this curious courtesy, quite unlike that habitual among men of decent breeding, which was peculiar to my friend. I have seen it in various companies high and low, and I realize how difficult it is to convey any impression of it. Not deferential nor insinuating, a certain grave yet gallant tone characterised it, which lifted its object to a plane quite superior to that of the ordinary small amenities of intercourse. Surprised at this new glimpse of my many-sided companion, pleased beyond measure

to be the object of this distinguished approach, I proposed an instant adjournment—we were taking our coffee after dejeuner—to see the works in question.

Knowing from the work that I had seen, that my visitor's aims were other than my own, it was with a half-hearted interest that I displayed the work of my summer. But in the character of his not overenthusiastic appreciation I soon learned that which, so many years later and in too scant measure, the English-reading public discovered in the author of the monograph on Velasquez. I was in the presence of a critic, subtle and unprejudiced, clear in his understanding, even more clear in the exposition of his conclusions.

Again I find myself in danger of conveying to my reader an impression of exaggerating a small event, an exchange of views between two students in the presence of unimportant work. The lapse of years has, however, but little dimmed the sense of the unusual that this trivial event left on my mind, and it must be remembered that at the time I knew scores of art students and had figured as actor or spectator in many such casual critical meetings. Moreover, since that time instructing in my turn, I have known many students of art and have made conscientious endeavour to penetrate their modes of thought to find among the number none who could be compared to Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson.

The words of my friend's critical appreciation have flown upon the wings which have carried so many of his wise and fanciful words beyond the ken of man. The import of it all was the recognition that, while I was undoubtedly "out of the game," I might still take

heart in the example of many men whose names I knew, whose works I had studied and admired, but who were, in the estimation of most of my comrades, either so long dead or, if still living, so forgotten that they counted for little. It seems strange that at that time the names of men considered important to-day were, if not unknown, at least never cited as examples in the little world of art students. With Stevenson alone I found a more tempered than my own but adequate appreciation for the primitive masters. Botticelli and Filippo Lippi were known to him and considered to be more than "historically" important; Chardin, for his unique gift as a painter's painter, and Prud'hon, for his nobility of form, grace of line, and subtlety of light and shade, were living influences, rather than half-forgotten painters of a preceding time; while Poussin he taught me to appreciate, and Millet I was to make him know later on. I found that, like myself, he had discovered the Renaissance gallery of sculpture, then half hidden in its wing of the Louvre, lacking communication with the more visited galleries, and had made acquaintance with the since well known "Unknown Woman" and with the epitome of grace in the works of Jean Goujon. The then derided Puvis de Chavannes had interested him. Baudry, who not long before I had been told was merely a "good official talent," we voted a "great swell," and, last of all, he quite gained my heart by sharing my admiration for the great works of Primaticcio and Rosso, decadent though they may be, in the neighbouring chateau of Fontainebleau; works to which I had been directed by no less a man than Millet. I was to learn later his catholic

appreciation of Titian, Veronese, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Velasquez, giants all, but not lacking admiration from all our comrades, in which we agreed.

"But why, with your ideas, are you studying with Duran, the realist of realists, when there are other men in Paris much nearer your game?" he asked in conclusion.

"Baudry will not take pupils and Duran may help me put flesh and blood into my nymphs," was my reason; which he flatteringly thought intelligent, and since, with a realizing sense of what I owe to my master, irrespective of the success of my endeavour, I have myself thought my decision to be fortunate.

The outcome of this talk, and those of the few remaining days of our stay at Barbizon that season, was that we departed for Paris sworn friends of closest intimacy; with the resolution that, if a studio at "eighty-one" was procurable, my new friend should become my near neighbour. And thus it was that Bob lived over the lôge of the concierge across the court from me.

IV

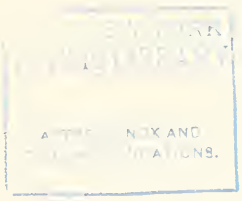
VEUVE PONCELET'S AND LAVENUE'S

IT was mid-November before we were finally settled in Paris for our winter work, and the alternation of the morning study in the adjacent school, the afternoon work in our studios, visits to the galleries or long rambles in all quarters of the beloved city with small attendant adventures, modest dinners in various restaurants, long prolonged in flow of talk, followed day by day. Bob, as I soon learned, was living upon the principal of his small fortune, finding the interest inadequate for his support, a solution of the financial problem which at the time seemed to both of us judicious and satisfactory. He was thus supplied with money, small in amount but sufficient for the modest needs of a student, with a regularity which, toward the end of every month, excited my admiration and envy. A number of years later, after my return home, I remember his writing me that he was enabled to live "by a succession of small miracles"; and this phrase best describes my own situation during most of my Paris life. Consequently there was a disparity in our state of fortune which often, to our mutual regret, denied me the privilege of seeking the restaurants which my friend frequented. Lavenue's, still existing and less changed than many other resorts of my youth in Paris, was the principal one of these. With Lavenue's I had made acquaintance the previous year by virtue of a doctor's prescription.

Immediately on my arrival in Paris I had delivered, as I have already told, certain letters of presentation in the then to me unknown language of the country. One of them was addressed to Adrien Gaudez, whom I found working in the employ of another sculptor in a spacious studio in the Rue de l'Abbaye, the former situation of one of the most densely filled prisons of the Reign of Terror. Gaudez, then nearing thirty, was of the robust race of Burgundy, of middle stature, compactly knit, his head with curling hair and beard like that of Bacchus, and an eye at once so clear, keen, and winning that I have known few men of more prepossessing appearance. The letter explaining the identity and purpose of the mute youth he understood at once, and with kindly humour he at last succeeded in making me understand, by pointing to the hour of six on the dial of a watch, that I was to return to the studio at that hour, the time of my visit being about two in the afternoon. At the appointed hour I again presented myself, and under his guidance, and being joined *en route* by one or two others, we proceeded the length of the Rue de Rennes as far as the Boulevard du Mont Parnasse; then, turning to the right, we found the line of cheap restaurants which still exist for the refreshment of the *cochers* connected with the railway station. About midway of the block we entered one of these. Before the door was the usual zinc counter of the *marchand du vin*, in a room where at metallic tables sat a number of the uniformed knights of the whip, and workingmen in blouses. To the right and back of the counter ran a dark passageway in which we entered and, passing through the kitchen at its

1. John Love 2. W. H. Low 3. Wyatt Eaton 4. C. E. Johnson 5. S. W. Van Schaick 6. Dagnan-Bouveret
7. Gustave Courtois 8. J. A. Rixens 9. Leonard Jarraud 10. Joseph Wencker 11. Théodore Ralli
12. J. F. Gueldry 13. Gaston Melingue 14. Paul Helleu 15. J. B. Duffaud 16. Albert Aublet

L'atelier Gérôme in 1873—in the courtyard of the École des Beaux-Arts



end, we found ourselves in a small paved court. From this we entered a detached building of one story containing two rooms. The first of these rooms, as I afterward learned, was reserved for a band of medical students, with whom, though for a long period we passed through their dining-room twice a day with a polite "bon jour," we never made acquaintance. Beyond, and looking out on the gardens of adjoining houses, was a similar room reserved for those known in our little circle as the "bande à Gaudez." We had a merry dinner, due, though I hardly comprehended it at the time, to the initiation of the new member from overseas; and with the ten or dozen men crowded into that little room I was to live on terms of more or less intermittent intimacy for the space of five years. When I think of the constant kindness with one so tongue-tied as to constantly demand their attention for the most trivial affairs of life, gratitude fails of expression. They were all young sculptors and painters, some lingering in the schools hoping to obtain the Prix du Rome, one of them, Rixens, succeeding a few years later; another, with a downy blond beard and a face denoting pugnacious determination to succeed, Bastien I heard him called, and as Bastien-Le Page, failing rather gloriously to win the coveted prix, becoming famous later; others out of school, some of them to-day well-known sculptors and painters in France; and others, to us then appearing equally talented, quite unknown or lying in forgotten graves. As we cannot remember how as children we make our first essays in expression by language, so, to-day, I fail to comprehend when my bonds were loosed and I could communicate with my

new-found friends. Necessity is undoubtedly a most efficient teacher of languages, and from the day when, in answer to my pantomimic inquiry as to the nature of the food before me, one of my clever friends drew a pair of long ears and caused me to apprehend donkey, when it was the innocuous rabbit, I made rapid progress in French. The food was certainly of more or less mysterious quality, though not unpalatable, but its modest price was its chief recommendation. With hard work in the school, the healthy appetite of youth, our merry company at table, and the privacy of the little dining-room where none but of our choice were allowed to penetrate, I esteemed myself fortunate until, after a few months, I began to feel a strange weakness and lassitude growing on me. It was in the midwinter of rain and penetrating cold, which belies the moderate degree it marks on the thermometer, which we overheated Americans feel so keenly in our winters in Paris, and I laid it to that. But as it became more persistently alarming, I sought the counsel of Doctor Desseins. This old gentleman, long since gone to his reward, had looked after the health of the artists of the quarter for many years, and with his long gray locks he was not unlike a painter of the generation where artistic temperament expressed itself in capillary exuberance; but his tonics did me but little good. One day at my studio, where I had for a few days been imprisoned by this *malaise*, he questioned me as to my diet. When I mentioned the name of our little restaurant he became at once excited and denounced the nourishment of all such places as slow poison. "Food is what you need,

food for a young growing animal. There's a good restaurant on the corner—Lavenue's; go there."

"But," I mildly objected, "Lavenue's is expensive and I have little money."

"You can probably get credit." "Yes, but I have no prospect of being able to pay." The good doctor, victim of the general misunderstanding that all Americans must of necessity be wealthy, at last was made to understand the extreme tenuity of my resources; but his final injunction and only prescription was to dine at Lavenue's as often as possible.

Upon the boulevard Lavenue's, especially since its restoration in these latter days, shows the outward signs of the first-class and expensive restaurant—a place to be shunned by even the most sybaritic student. At the extremity of the angle of the corner upon which it stands—upon the other street, the Rue de l'Arrivée—one enters upon a more reassuring and modest room with a glorified specimen of the wine merchant's zinc counter, over which presides as cashier the perennial Mademoiselle Fanny. This buxom lady, who makes out the restaurant bills in a cursive caligraphy which defies the most earnest study to discover the names of the dishes ordered, I call perennial, for it is now a matter of thirty years that I have known her in her neatly fluted white cap, her portly person flanked by dishes of tempting fruit, and her high coloured visage relieved against a row of many coloured *liqueurs;* and in that space of time she has not progressed beyond the becoming middle age of the time of our first acquaintance. Nor is this the only mystery connected with her, for at the time of my first knowledge of the

house she serves, her throne was occupied by a person of precisely similar appearance, whom I knew as Mademoiselle Rosalie. There was a lapse of some eight years that Lavenue's knew me not, as I was on this side of the Atlantic during that time, but on my returning to Paris and seeking my cherished resort, I saluted the presiding divinity as I stopped to speak to my presumed old acquaintance, by the name of Mademoiselle Rosalie. The name she quietly disclaimed, though, from business reasons I fear, she professed to know me well and to have deplored my long absence. From delicacy, fearing that the present Fanny may replace a twin sister Rosalie snatched from her proud eminence by grim death, I have always forborne to probe further this mystery of resemblance; but, Rosalie-Fanny or Fanny-Rosalie, the restaurant Lavenue has been fortunate in possessing through a generation this smiling evidence of the good fare to be had within. Passing, with a word to Mademoiselle Fanny, one enters an inner room lined with tables which, save for the modern electric lights and the addition of a glass extension upon the further side where in the earlier days a garden existed, has little changed since I first saw it. The napery is spotless, the waiters, through long association with artists and writers, a shade less solemn than in restaurants of the same merit, the cooking excellent, and the cellar well provided. A tradition that the prices in this room are less than in the portion of the restaurant upon the boulevard, a tradition which I have never verified, its greater seclusion and more modest appearance has made it for many years the dining place of the "arrived" artists of the quarter. In my

day and even now it is little or not at all frequented by the students. As a rule, the Lavenue habit is contemporaneous at the earliest with the acceptance of a first picture or statue at the Salon, when the neophyte may be pardoned for considering himself a full-fledged artist. To-day our tongue is heard there often, for the influx of Americans and English to the Mont Parnasse quarter has been very great since the days here described; but in my too infrequent earlier visits I think I was alone of my nationality as I sat in a corner modestly, surrounded by red buttonholed painters and sculptors, all endowed, in my imagination, with celebrity, and many of whom were indeed eminent. By careful scrutiny of the menu a poor student could procure a sustaining, and to his then gastronomic experience, a supremely succulent repast at a price which did not inordinately stretch his purse. Care was indeed necessary, as on one occasion in the early spring, when the presence of asparagus for the first time on the bill of fare overcame the dictates of prudence, and the decision to recklessly expend three francs surprised the venerable waiter, who was a living image of Louis Phillipe, *ci-devant* King of the French, into a respectful reminder, "Monsieur does not ignore that *asperges nouvelles* is a *primeur*." The good old boy had probably been long a sympathetic witness of my efforts to conscientiously reconcile the pleasing prescription of Dr. Dessein with the modicity of my resources, and I thanked him for his timely warning.

To Lavenue's, to whose delights I introduced Bob on our return to Paris, I was unable to accompany him as much as I could wish. For the delight of my society,

as he politely phrased it, he occasionally accompanied me to the Widow Poncelet's, as our modest restaurant was known, from the name of the soberly garbed and sad-eyed proprietor. Of the company assembled there, of my French friends, he approved heartily; of my mentor Gaudez especially; though, indeed, I have never known man—or woman—to resist his sunny influence. Upon the question of the food he had decided reservations; though, warned by my experience of the previous year, beefsteaks of surprising thinness but of some probable sustenance enabled me to avoid more savoury, though more dubious, compounds. It was my friend's whim, when thus accompanying me, to order large numbers of hard-boiled eggs, upon the plea that by its conformation the boiled egg ran no risk of lack of cleanliness in preparation; while a careful inspection, when once the shell was broken, would reassure the consumer as to its relative age. Not infrequently this happy band, regardless of the season, would vote an adjournment after the *déjeuner*, by the easy means of the near-by railway, to some country place near Paris; and the woods of Chaville, or nearer Clamart, would re-echo with our laughter. If it was winter a brisk walk through the deserted alleys in the blink of frosty sunshine set our blood in circulation, and resort was always had, before our return to Paris, to an inn where a copious bowl of hot mulled wine was ordered and despatched. If it was summer or early spring there was a certain inn half lost in the woods of Chaville, in the little hamlet of Vèlézay, where a dinner of sorrel soup, a rabbit stew, and a salad of crisp romaine, redolent with chives, chervil, and all manner

of fragrant herbs, followed by a large segment of creamy Brie cheese, was to be had, washed down by a red *vin du pays* that was almost blue. This simple repast, partaken out of doors in a leafy arbour, enlivened by talk and songs, lasted till late in the evening, when we returned to Paris by the last train unless, as sometimes happened, we lingered too long, in which case we valiantly trudged home on foot.

I do not wish, by this chapter devoted to dietary questions, to give the impression that the pleasures of the table occupied an undue proportion of our lives. We were endowed, undoubtedly, with the appetites of our time of life, and indeed many of our pleasantest experiences throughout existence centre about the table, but I remember my own forebodings in my early days in Paris at what seemed to me an inordinate length of time passed over lunches and dinners; which, as I have explained, were generally the reverse of luxurious, it is true, but precious hours seemed, to my ignorance, to be lost there. I had come fresh from New York, where the gobbled midday meal had seemed a necessary rite in order to profit by the daylight hours. We have become wiser since then and somewhat less in a hurry, but as I found these things ordered in France, my first thought was that I had fallen in with idlers as, arriving from a morning's work in the school at the Widow Poncelet's at noon, I found that my friends gave up an hour for *déjeuner*, often lengthened to two by the post-prandial talk to the accompaniment of tobacco and coffee. But I soon realized that we were all at work at eight in the morning, preceding by an hour or more the usual time of beginning our daily

task at home. I found also that these four morning hours, if they were devoted to working from life, constituted a fair day's work, so great is the nervous force expended in studying the ever-changing model. The noonday rest gave us recuperated strength for the lesser tasks of the afternoon, and our occasional outings, not too often repeated, were beneficial in the wise alternation of work and play. Therefore I soon realized that my French comrades, all my seniors and, as their work proved, vastly my superiors artistically, had ordained their lives wisely. The history of their race, the thoroughness of their acquirement in every intellectual field, has proven this long ago; and, had I known and appreciated as much at the outset, I should not have feared that, having come to France to work, I was in danger of being led by example into too much play. This record is, after all, one of memories of play rather than that of work, which by its nature would at best be a chronicle of oft-repeated effort, of baffling deception, and of infinitesimal progress in the oft-travelled and arduous highway of art; and, once for all, I may ask the reader to believe that our student life knew no more than a just proportion of "cakes and ale," and that in the measure of our respective abilities—apprentices and accepted workmen—we laboured at our trade.

V

ENTER R. L. S.

I HAVE spoken of the plaster lion which guarded the doorway leading to the painters' studios at "eighty-one." Since his brief hour of glory in some long-forgotten Salon exhibition the noble animal had encountered many vicissitudes, and suffered much indignity at the hands of a lawless generation, in his long career as sentinel at our door. Bereft of his tail, with pencilled mustaches and many scrawled inscriptions covering him, it was left to my ingenious friend Bob to discover that, by beating this king of beasts with his cane, the reverberations of his hollow plaster interior made an excellent substitute for a gong. This my friend put to use, rather than climb the stairs and knock at my door, when he desired to communicate with me. Thus summoned one spring evening in 1875 to my window, I looked down to find Bob arrayed for the street, intent upon a walk and a dinner afterward somewhere on the heights of Montmartre, where we seldom ventured, for which he desired my company.

Descending to the courtyard I joined him, and in passing we paused at the porter's lodge to inquire for letters. There was one for Bob which he tore open, and after scanning it passed to me, saying, "Louis is coming over." I read the brief note; it was the first time I saw the handwriting which was to become so familiar to me and by whose medium the world was to

gain so greatly. I fancy I can see it yet, the blue-gray paper with the imprint of the Savile Club in London, the few scrawled words to the effect that the writer was "seedy," that the weather was bad in London, and that he would arrive the next morning in Paris to seek sunshine and rest, and at the end the three initials R. L. S. which now are known the world over.

I had heard much of this cousin, of the life which Bob and he had led in Edinburgh, where their revolt against the overstrict conventionality of that famous town had been flavoured with the zest of forbidden fruit. I had heard in detail of escapades innocent enough, the outcome of boyish spirits, in which both had shared, and of which Bob, philosophically enough, had borne the blame of leading the younger cousin into mischief. I had also heard that Louis was "going in" for literature, but this had not interested me particularly, for in those days we were all "going in" for one thing or the other; and so long as it was not banking, commerce, politics, or other unworthy or material pursuits it merely seemed the normal and proper function of life. I had heard enough, however, aided by my hearty affection for my friend Bob, to be keenly interested in the advent of the cousin, and I awaited the morrow with some impatience, for it was at once decided that we would meet the newcomer on his arrival at the St. Lazare station.

The morrow dawned, one of those days which fickle Paris gives in the spring to atone for her many climatic misdeeds of the winter. A filmy sky, the sunshine softly veiled, the trees in the fresh glory of their new attire, and the life of the streets partaking of the joyous-

ness of the *renouveau*, as the old French calendars name their spring. It was a good day to undertake anything, better still to journey across the beautiful city, loitering on the bridges or through the courtyard of the Louvre and, best of all, to meet a new friend: to add to one's life another link in the chain of friendship, the most enduring of human ties.

At the appointed hour there descended from the Calais train a youth "unspeakably slight," with the face now familiar to us, the eyes widely spaced, a nose slightly aquiline and delicately modelled, the high cheek bones of the Scot; a face which in repose was not, I fancy, unlike that of many of his former comrades in his native town. It was not a handsome face until he spoke, and then I can hardly imagine that any could deny the appeal of the vivacious eyes, the humour or pathos of the mobile mouth, with its lurking suggestion of the great god Pan at times, or fail to realize that here was one so evidently touched with genius that the higher beauty of the soul was his.

The appearance and the sense of youth he kept through life, though this was perhaps more discernible in conversation with him than from the published portraits. An early one of these from a photograph taken in California, though some years later than our first meeting, preserves much the same aspect as that he had when he stepped from the Calais train on the memorable springtime morning in 1875.

One other detail of personal appearance I mention, for we hear much in his latter life of his long black hair. His hair never was black, though it grew darker with advancing years and became brown of the deepest

hue, but at the time of our first meeting and for some years later it was very light, almost of the sandy tint we are wont to associate with his countrymen. In proof of this I have a little colour-sketch, painted in the autumn of '75, which shows him with his flaxen locks; "all that we have," as his wife once said sadly, "that will make people believe that Louis' hair was ever light."

Of his dress my memory is less vivid. He may have worn a velvet coat or a knit jersey in guise of waistcoat; I have known him to do both at later periods, unconscious that for the boulevards at least his costume was less than suitable; but I aver nothing. Later he laughingly recalled that I appeared to him that morning in a frock coat and a smoking-cap; and if his recollection was correct—if I had, knowing that I was to meet one free from Gallic prejudice, temporarily resurrected my sealskin *toque*, which in any case was not a smoking-cap—it will be seen that my taste in dress was sufficiently eclectic to condone any lapse from strict conventionality on his part.

The formalities of introduction were soon over. The formalities of intercourse never weighed heavily upon us in those days, nor indeed with Louis in aftertime; his luggage was despatched to Lavenue's hotel, contiguous to the restaurant, and consequently near our studios, and light-handed and light-hearted we proceeded to retrace our steps across Paris.

And then began a flow of talk which, as I look back, seems to have been an irresistible current flowing through our lives, not only on this occasion but whenever, in Louis' frequent sojourn in France for the next

A youthful portrait of R. L. Stevenson.
Preserving his aspect in the days here described.

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few years, we three met together. Talk, even of the quality of which my two friends were past masters, is a light wine that can be neither bottled for preservation nor decanted, and if I were able to here faithfully report the abundantly flowing discourse of that day, doubtless it would appear of no great import. There would still be lacking the atmosphere of spring in Paris, the growing interest of three sympathetic yet widely differing natures, and, above all, the brave outlook upon life from the vantage-ground of youth. For we were very young, Louis Stevenson three years my elder, and his cousin three years his senior, but our combined ages were scarcely more than the three score years and ten allotted to man in which to acquire wisdom.

Wisdom, therefore, we had not, but we had ideas and were not chary of their expression; we had insatiable curiosity upon all subjects pertaining to art and letters, and to life as well, though in the restricted sense in which, by representation, art sought the expression of life, or was in turn influenced by human conditions.

Hence it is no great loss that few of the many words uttered on this day of our first meeting have lived beyond their birth; but it was good to be out in the pleasant sunshine, in the city kind above all others to our kind, to be at the threshold of our lives, and even the certainty, which probably we all felt that what we were saying was important, that possibly the whole course of art and letters was waiting expectantly for our decision before determining its final direction, may be pardoned us.

Again I must qualify my words. We had the strong,

the ordinary, convictions of youth, but we had also some of its modesty. One who, like Louis, had such a hearty respect for his craft, so great a solicitude from the first to master his tools before essaying to use them, never, even when he had made himself master to a degree attained by few English men of letters, conceived his individual effort to be important. This, in the quasi-solitude in which he had lived in his native town, he had taught himself. As for the other two: if Paris teaches much that is worthy to the practitioners of art, she teaches nothing more worthy, nor more thoroughly, than the lesson that Art is long; that to reach the heights that others have attained, the route is stony and difficult.

Therefore, on that spring morning, we already carried as ballast to the clipper-ship of our speculative theories upon the inexhaustible subject of art the sobering conviction that our individual effort was but 'prentice work, and that before we could count as accepted workmen in our several crafts much water would run under the Bridge of Arts on its way to the sea.

Our wandering steps had brought us to that Pont des Arts which, bridging the Seine from the Louvre to the Institute, is most appropriately the only bridge in Paris over which you must walk; no easy progress in a carriage is possible for him who follows that path. Here we sat on a bench in the sun, looking up to where the boat-shaped Cité swims upon the current, bearing the proud towers of Notre Dame. To the left we could follow the long façade of the Louvre, and to the right stood the Institute where, as we knew, forty antiquated gentlemen sat in judgment upon æsthetic

France; a judgment which we were prepared to question, an institution we were equally prepared to overthrow; though to-day forty gentlemen, some of the same, still more antiquated, and others replacing those gone to their Academical reward, still continue to govern æsthetic France, while another generation of brash youths continues to question its judgments.

We sat basking in the sun for some time, talking of many things after the manner of the Walrus and the Carpenter, until, at the approach of noon, we discovered that we were hungry, and, forsaking the pathway of the Arts, came down to earth, hailed an open carriage and rode in state to Lavenue's. This was Louis Stevenson's first visit to the restaurant of our predilection of which he in turn became a votary; in his letters and his published works its name is often mentioned and its praises sounded. The mendacious divinity who presides over the bad quarter hour of payment—Rosalie-Fanny (or Fanny-Rosalie)—will to-day aver that she remembers the cousins well, and certainly for a number of years they were frequent visitors to her shrine.

This morning, in honour of the occasion, we had a better *déjeuner* than usual, and, scorning the *vin ordinaire*, we drank to our better acquaintance in an excellent Beaujolais-Fleury at two francs fifty centimes the bottle, a vintage of which Louis wrote to me four or five years later, after my return to the United States:

"Lavenue, hallowed be his name! Hallowed his old Fleury—of which you did not see—as I did—the glorious apotheosis; advanced on a Tuesday to three francs, on the Thursday to six, and on Friday swept off, holus-bolus, for the proprietor's private consump-

tion. Well, we had the start of that proprietor. Many a good bottle came our way and was worthily made welcome."

Here after our lunch, with coffee and cigarettes we sat, as we did so often on later occasions, until four or five in the afternoon. Before, during and after the meal we talked, and here I was to encounter, for the first time, a whimsical instance of my new friend's sense of fitness in language. We were deep in a discussion about some detail or character of Balzac, the particular point we sought to elucidate I have forgotten, but at the time Bob and I were deep in the wonderful reconstitution of the life of France from Napoleon to Louis Phillipe which the master-romancer had fashioned, and Louis, we found, was no less interested than ourselves. Suddenly, without a note of warning, Louis changed from the language we had spoken up to that moment, which, of course, was our native English, to French. Now Bob spoke French somewhat hesitatingly, choosing his words with care but with excellent knowledge of the idiom; Louis' French was not unlike his cousin's; and mine, picked up in a more constant frequentation of French companions than is common among foreigners in Paris, was sufficiently fluent. I forbear to characterize our accents; having, indeed, to this day reasons for avoiding that thorny subject in so far as I am personally concerned.

Up to the time of this change of language not one word of French had been spoken, and for all that Louis knew I might have been helpless in that polite tongue, but as we continued I soon realized that for our particular discussion of characters, events and of

Le Pont des Arts, Paris, the Institute in the background

style, which were all French in essence, my new friend was not ill-inspired, and that we three English-speaking youths could better analyze the subject before us in French than in our native tongue. Speaking of this long after, I found that Louis had quite forgotten the incident, and I think it probable that at the time he was hardly conscious of it, his sense of the proper word and the fit phrase leading him into this excursion into a foreign language.

From Lavenue's we sought the garden of the Luxembourg, where we sat long into the twilight, taking our dinner somewhere near and adjourning to a café afterward. Here with our coffee a cordial, chartreuse or curaçoa was brought in a small decanter, accompanied by the usual small liqueur glasses; and here the impish extravagance of my new friend, which was at the bottom of so many of the youthful escapades in Edinburgh, and which, conducted with an enthusiasm worthy of more serious objects, had more than once caused dire prognostications of his future to be drawn, became manifest.

"I wonder," he said suddenly while sipping his cordial, "why this sort of thing is always served in such small glasses," and calling for an ordinary water glass, he half filled it with the cordial and drank it. I exclaimed in horror that it would make him ill, but, enjoying my surprise, he declared that it did not matter, because "I have come to Paris to rest and to-morrow I shall lie abed all day." This was the first reference to his feeling "seedy," which his letter had mentioned, and, indeed, throughout his life, except when it was forced upon him by actual physical prostration, beyond

the precautions which he later learned to observe, there was no allusion to, no apparent realization of, his delicate condition. At this time, and during the three years that followed, I was never conscious that he was more than a little less robust than most of us were.

Knowing him as intimately as I did, it was not until a much later time that I realized that his early sojourns in the South of France were in the quest of health. At Barbizon he was among the foremost in our long walks over the plains or in the forest of Fontainebleau, and in the summers of 1876–77 at Grez, where he led a semi-amphibious life, on and in the river Loing, he never seemed ill, and as youth is not solicitous on questions of health, it never occurred to us that his slender frame encased a less robust constitution than that of others. "My illness is an incident outside of my life" was his watchword later, and I need not enlarge on his brave attitude in that respect.

At the close of this eventful day we sauntered leisurely up the Boulevard St. Michel, entering, for a few moments, the Bal Bullier, which we surveyed philosophically, as prudent youths taking their pleasure otherwise, and having small interest in the riotous scenes enacted there. Thence, descending the Boulevard Mont Parnasse, we escorted Louis to the door of his hostelry, where we left him, appointing a meeting for the following evening, in order that he might carry out his plan of resting through the day undisturbed.

At the appointed time he reappeared, feeling, he assured us, much refreshed, and the morning after the two cousins departed for Barbizon. I was urged to accompany them, but I was busy upon a picture which

was to be my first offering to the Salon. Could I have foreseen the cruelty of the jury of admission some days later I should have foregone this exhibition of Spartan virtue and, accompanying my friends, would now be able to describe the first impression which the smiling plain and shady woods made on Stevenson; who for several years was to find in Fontainebleau and the adjoining villages of Barbizon and Grez fields for work and play, influential at the time, and to which, in pleasant memory, he often reverted, until the end came in the far South Seas.

VI

COMRADES AND CAMARADES

THE summer was yet young when Louis rejoined his cousin in Paris. This time he slipped so naturally into our easy intimacy that he soon became known to all the little circle in which we moved. The exodus from town was approaching. The long-suffering colour men were supplying their different clients with canvases and colours for the summer work; and as in only a few instances current coin of the republic was exacted in these transactions, and as the hotel keepers of Barbizon, Cernay, or Pont Aven were known to be equally liberal in their disposition to extend credit, art for art's sake seemed less of an illusory dream than any one of these young painters were likely to find it in their after careers.

This summer was to see assembled at Barbizon most of our intimates in Paris, some of whom, pupils of the *atelier Duran*, had elected a preference for the society of Bob, even as I had, rather than for what I presume considered itself the more orderly element among the English-speaking pupils of the master. First and foremost among these was Henry Enfield, of whom I have already spoken. His studio was on the same floor as that of Bob at eighty-one, and through the winter these studios had been the common meeting-place in the evenings. During a portion of the winter, in fact, Bob had been inflicted with what he, in common with us all, had considered the infantile malady known as the

"Bob," with the mumps

From a sketch by R. A. M. Stevenson

mumps. Confined to the studio, but not suffering particularly, this illness had served as an excuse for dispensing a rough hospitality to the intimates, in which the little kitchen attached to his studio had come into play. Here on merry evenings numbers of the men congregated, and I recall a beefsteak supper where our invitation bore the admonition to each guest to bring his beefsteak with him. Fire and the adjuncts of a comfortable meal were provided by the hosts, and a surprising variety of steaks were brought, and various conflicting theories as to the best manner of preparing that delicacy were put into practice. Soon after Christmas Enfield had returned from a holiday visit to England and brought with him a new accession to our ranks. Arthur Heseltine, the newcomer, was fresh from the South Kensington School, which we, as true partisans of a French training, looked upon with small favour. I alone, perhaps, had a sneaking fondness for the preoccupation with composition as one of the chief technical qualities of art which characterized the instruction in the Slade school, at least at that time, and my voice was occasionally raised in protest against the running fire of criticism to which the precepts that our new friend respected were subjected. Heseltine took these strictures in the best-natured spirit, and as he was two or three years younger than any of the band, and seemed even more juvenile as this was his first absence from home, he fell submissively under the rule of his elders. "As every self-respecting British householder should have a barrel of Bass' ale in his cellar," according to Bob's contention, a small barrel had been procured and, lacking the cellar, it proudly occupied a

corner of the kitchen. One of the duties assigned to Heseltine was to draw this ale whenever called upon to do it. "The apprentice," as he had been at first dubbed, soon gave way to another title, and the scrupulously brought up youth was thereafter known as the "pot-boy." Anything more at variance with the appearance, manners, and general disposition of our friend would be hard to imagine, and his lack of fitness for the office was soon demonstrated when through absent-mindedness he left the faucet open after drawing a pot of ale. The precious fluid flooded the kitchen, leaked through the ceiling of the room below, which was the bedroom of the irate concierge, brought up that worthy in a spasm of too articulate rage and cast a gloom not only upon the would-be "British householders" but upon all their associates. Dire prophecies as to the future end of our friend as the penalty of this catastrophe have not been realized, for since these days he has remained faithful to the pleasant country of France, and in his handsome house at Marlotte, on the border of the forest of Fontainebleau, a few years ago it was given me to sit at Heseltine's table and in reminiscental mood recall these days of our youth.

His sponsor in our circle, Enfield, had a pretty talent for the violin and the "Men of Harlech" and a number of old English airs, the refrain of one of which comes back to me:

> "Come lassies and lads, get leave of your dads
> And come to the"——

and here my memory deserts me; but all these airs were played and sung with gusto. Another neighbour,

Wilbur Woodward, would bring his banjo from his adjoining studio, and as he was from Cincinnati, memories of the songs of the Ohio would resound from the walls of this Paris studio.

Woodward was one of the types of the quarter. When not more than a child he had accompanied his father, an officer in the volunteer army in the Civil War, had been present and beat his drum in actual battles. He had much of the romantic bravado with which the Rough Rider has in these later times familiarized us, but at the epoch of which I speak this type, transplanted to decorous France, was sufficiently singular. Coiffed by a sombrero, his hair about his shoulders, and long cavalry boots reaching nearly to his hips he must have appeared a strange figure to the French inhabitants of the quarter, but he pursued his way unmolested in the large liberty allowed to students by that common-sensible nation. Beyond these peculiarities, Woodward was a well-read, quiet fellow with more than ordinary talent. He elected to remain in Paris, and gained sufficient recognition there to be able to support himself by making drawings for the French illustrated papers. He returned to this country in the employ of one of these on the occasion of the Yorktown Centennial Celebration in 1883, and while here was taken suddenly ill and died. As these memories rise to me one after the other, his figure comes up strongly against the background of time; his pale, handsome face framed in his long black hair, his long, lithe figure, the busy fingers strumming the banjo, his feet keeping time as, with the accent of the negro roustabout, he sang:

"Oh! old Aunt Sally, she doan' do well,
She doan' do as she us'ter;
She use to stan' in dat back door
An' watch dat bobtail rooster.
Oh la! gals, yer shan't go wander,
Oh la! gals!"

Interminable verses, some remembered from nights on the Ohio, others improvised, after the manner of the original versifiers who thus accompanied their work, ensued; while the old repertoire of "Gentle Nellie Bly," "'Way Down Upon the Suwanee River," and the "Old Kentucky Home" were all at Woodward's finger ends.

By this time also Theodore Robinson had come to Paris, and again one who for many years was the best of friends appears to me as he appeared then. Frail, with a husky, asthmatic voice and a laugh that shook his meagre sides and yet hardly made itself heard, timid and reticent, saying little, yet blessed with as keen a sense of humour as any one I have ever known, Robinson was received at once into our little circle with the highest favour.

At first he seemed almost negative, so quietly he took his place among us, but once the shell of diffidence was pierced few of the men had thought as much or as independently, and the knowledge which he possessed he had made so thoroughly his own by some innate faculty that a truism uttered by him had a flavour of originality.

His work partook of the same qualities of originality from the first, though it was to be many years before it shed a certain dryness and under the influence of the

Frank O'Meara

From an early work by John S. Sargent, in the possession of Mrs. Isobel Strong

Impressionistic school blossomed into colour and achieved popularity of the kind which the painter occasionally vouchsafes to his fellow. Popularity with the collector and the general public he never attanied during his lifetime, though I am glad to think now how much it appealed to me from the first, and how when his day of recognition arrived, though day had closed for him, it brought to me no element of surprise. Robinson, though born in Vermont, had been taken as a child to Wisconsin, which seemed to many of us quite remotely Western, and we shared with our foreign friends the mingled sense of strangeness and appropriateness to the life which we fancied typical of our Western States when, on turning over the leaves of one of Robinson's sketch-books, we came upon a hasty scrawl, and, half guessing at its purport, asked for its meaning. "Oh, that was the hanging of a horse-thief that I saw out in Colorado," was Robinson's nonchalant rejoinder.

To this quiet, self-contained and essentially American product there may be opposed a pure type of the Celt in Frank O'Meara. To the capricious moodiness of his race, the alternate sunshine and rain of his emerald isle, O'Meara joined an exquisitely sensitive temperament as an artist. Memories of dim woods peopled by slender damsels, half-fairy and half-human, rise up as I think of his work. None of it ever approached definite maturity of execution, and in the school he was, like the rest of us, quite given over to a painstaking realism; while I can imagine that his high-strung assumption of materialism would have bitterly resented the qualification of his efforts as poetical. Nevertheless, once re-

leased from the thraldom of school-work, his fancy ran riot, and much which we to-day, in the work of W. B. Yeats and others, recognize as a definite attempt to express the national characteristics of the Irish race in poetry and painting, was foreshadowed in the tentative efforts of O'Meara.

Superficially he realized fairly well one of the heroes of Charles Lever's novels, gay, witty, and insouciant, with a capacity for a sudden white anger, when it behooved his best friends to treat him with caution until a change of mood brought back the sunshine, accompanied with profuse self-condemnation, warm apologies, and humorous excuses for his "wild Irish" temper. The portrait here reproduced, an early work of Sargent, filled with the promise which he has since so amply fulfilled, gives O'Meara as we knew him, and augured hopefully of the rare gifts as a painter with which we judged him endowed. But little was to come of it, for, his student days finished, he withdrew to Grez, and there living much by himself, under conditions that were physically and mentally unhealthy, he died before his promise was fulfilled.

In my intimacy with Bob, which was so promptly shared by Louis, I served as a means of procuring for them occasional glimpses of the life of the French student. Nothing could afford a stronger contrast to our essentially Anglo-Saxon group than the two men who were chief among my Gallic companions, unless it was the contrast between these men themselves.

Adrien Gaudez was of the purest French-Burgundian type, something like the bouquet of the rich generous wine of the country from which he came emanated from

The Nymph Echo

From the statue by Adrien Gaudez

his presence. He was an artist to his finger-tips; no expression of art was to him negligible and few were unfamiliar. Failing in the earlier years of his practice to win the Prix de Rome, the stepping-stone lacking which the sculptor in France can seldom hope to share in any large measure in the official commissions by which the government virtually keeps alive the art of sculpture, or to penetrate later into the inner sanctuary of the Institute, Gaudez found success with the larger public. In the Salon he early won his medals, and by the reproduction of his larger works on a reduced scale in bronze he achieved a fair degree of popular success. The antithesis of all that is stilted and ponderous, the work of Gaudez runs the gamut, from the graceful eighteenth-century sculpture of Clodion to the closer characterization of the school of Rude. The *nymphe Echo*, reproduced here from the marble which formed part of the collection of Alexandre Dumas fils, has much of the charm of the eighteenth century, while the tense virility of the "Chiseler," a figure erected before the Mairie of the 3d arrondissement,—a quarter of Paris where bronze founderies and metal workers abound,—is marked by the keen observation and strong individuality of the later French school. The list of his works would be long, including the superb nude "Harvester" in the Parc Monceau or the portrait statue of Parmentier in the square at Neuilly, and he thus may be said to have left his mark on Paris and the sculpture of his time without achieving, however, the higher official honours which France accords to its favoured sculptors. Gustave Geoffroy, the well-known art critic, has best explained the position of Gaudez in

a Salon criticism. "He [Gaudez] is reproached with having too much *esprit* in his work; surely a grateful fault when so many sculptors have none." But all this deals with a Gaudez of later life, through which and to the end our friendship survived, and not to my familiar companion of the days of which I write, whence through the mists of memory he emerges clad in *paletot noisette*, a coat of faded brown-green, with his heavy cane and inseparable pipe. A grave and even tender solicitude for the young American confided to his care made him in those days more than a comrade and to some degree my mentor. For that matter, though scarcely the senior of his immediate following, he was by that little company its unchallenged leader, and by no assumption of superiority on his part; none of us, though we used freely the tutoiement, and addressed each other as "thee" and "thou," according to custom, used these familiar terms with him.

One of his most inspiring qualities was a courageous optimism and, though then and later we shared rather more than the usual hardships that fall to the impecunious follower of the arts, I never remember him being cast down or despairing. To any one who knows intimately the life of a sculptor in Paris, there are few careers where the rewards are less and where the intervals between opportunities for employment or production are greater. Of course, this was more marked in these early days, for in his later time my friend became, for a French sculptor, almost conspicuously prosperous; but, in direst poverty or temporary affluence, Gaudez worked with a stout heart and an unfailing confidence that gave courage not only to

L'ami Gaudez, 1875

From a sketch in oil by W. H. Low

himself, but to his intimates; all of whom to a large degree shared a common purse, with no perceptible effect on the fluctuation of the money market.

The second of these friends was a type more common in fiction than often met with in life.

Arthur Cocles, such was the classic surname of one who realized more truly the existence, the character, and aims, or the lack of aim, of the traditional Bohemian than any one of the many students with whom I was thrown. Many of these unwittingly lived *la vie de Bohème;* some few, perhaps, consciously, if unwillingly, did so; and fewer still tried with a brave show to flaunt their indifference to conventionality before the world—in a world that was placidly indifferent to their existence. In all these cases, however, it could be felt that the morrow would possibly change one and all, that condition and not nature was the reason for the existence of all these Rodolphes and Schaunards. But as the gem is to the imitation, so was my friend Cocles to the pseudo-Bohemian. Born on a canal in the north of France, the child of a poor boatman, how and why he had drifted to Paris when a boy I know not, nor where he had acquired his curious substitute for an education. On some subjects of the most usual character he was densely ignorant, upon others, ofttimes of an unusual cast, he was extremely well informed. A voracious reader, rarely without a book in his pocket, and creating for himself abundant leisure, in fine weather he would seek the Luxembourg gardens. There, first carefully perusing the daily paper, as he gravely held it to be the duty of every one to keep himself informed of the state of politics and the general

progress of the world, he would with a cherished volume pass the long afternoons in reading. For a time he shared the studio with Gaudez, who for many years had been in more ways than one his friend. It was due to his influence that Cocles had consented to study for a time at the École des Beaux-Arts, where he had displayed considerable talent, and on leaving the school Gaudez had found work for him as an assistant to one of the older sculptors of the time, Salmson, who had befriended him in many ways, and whose studio, when all else failed, was still open to him as a refuge. Work for other men, intermittently enough, gave him the little he needed to live, and he busied himself with projecting masterpieces of his own at intervals. I would not venture to count the number of such works that I have seen begun. None were ever finished. The mood changed, an inspiring model was not obtainable, or a newer subject presented itself to the detriment of the half-finished figure; though some of these beginnings were of more than usual promise, for we all accorded the possession of talent to the dreamer. These continual failures did not in the least disturb my volatile friend.

"*N'insultez pas une femme qui tombe*," I remember him quoting wittily as he destroyed one of these figures; for Victor Hugo's verse was frequently on his lips, while he could quote whole pages of Alfred de Musset. At one time he was in temporary possession of a small shop, which, by the easy process of screening the lower part of the shop-window, he had converted into a studio, obtaining possession at a nominal rent by a clause inserted in a formal lease that explained in

legal phraseology the reduction of price, "since M. Cocles had no intention of transacting business on the premises." His humorous appreciation of the unwitting truth of this phrase, rather than the convenience of the room as a studio, was, I am certain, his reason for abiding there. It was in the populous quarter inhabited by mechanics and filled with factories, where this shop-studio was situated, that he once invited me to dinner, and the purchase of the various articles for this modest repast at divers small shops brought into play his amazing vocabulary of Parisian slang and quaint observations, that left each shopkeeper convulsed with laughter as we bore away the concomitants of our feast.

As singular in appearance as in manner, he was in any company a marked man. Of skeleton thinness of figure, his long legs were encased in the tightest of trousers, and his beardless mask was invariably surmounted by an opera-hat, which, on entering a room, he always flattened and held by the rim, daintily, like a dish; occasionally waving it, as much gesticulation punctuated his talk. When Gaudez and he took their walks abroad, the thick-set, replete figure of the former and the extreme tenuity of Cocles, with a long coat flapping about his meagre shanks, enforced an extreme contrast, which was further accentuated in their characters, for in Gaudez a substratum of strong commonsense and acceptation of the hard terms on which an unsympathetic world alone tolerates the man preoccupied with problems of art, was present even in these insouciant years, while Cocles then and thereafter steadfastly refused to strike his flag to the *bourgeois*.

But while the society of Cocles was a constant delight in the city, where at each turn some unexpected sally of wit or semi-profound philosophy bubbled from his lips, it was in the country, in the presence of nature, that he was at his best. With some predisposition to accept as truth all "doubtful tales from faery-land," it was not difficult for me, in my long rambles with Cocles in the woods of Clamart, Chaville, or, later, at Fontainebleau, to believe that I had unearthed a faun. His running comment on the most trivial of the multitudinous events which transpire to the observing eye on a country ramble were inimitable. Throughout the whimsical comments ran a vein of poetry, ringing true, inasmuch as it was quite unconscious; and, though from his untrammeled, undirected existence from childhood in Paris my friend had not escaped scathless, here in the woods he was as innocent as a child. I have seen him *tête-à-tête* with a toad, or scaling a sunny rock, scattering green, glittering lizards in all directions in their vain pursuit, or baring a long, lean arm to plunge into the burrow of some animal in the hope of finding its denizen at home. All this fearlessly, while, the mood changing, after nightfall or in the long twilight of the woods, he has walked clinging to my arm in quite visible alarm—the simple terror of the city child before the solemnity of nature.

Nor must I fail to recall his delight in the mimic life of the stage. In those days we had of the best; we saw Delaunay, brave "in green ribbons," playing Alceste; despite the weight of years carrying conviction through his finished art; we saw the young Sarah

Cocles, in the Luxembourg Gardens

From a pencil sketch by W. H. Low

AND
ATIONS.

Bernhardt; heard the "voice of gold" before long declamation had marred its lustre, and saw the pale star of her genius rise in the glorious constellation of the Français of that day. We were modest frequenters of the *parterre*, but with true nobility, urged thereto by Cocles, we sternly refused the not uncommon practice of the students, who gain entrance for a trivial sum by lending their applause to the *claque*. This questionable institution exists in all French theatres, and its leader by preconcerted signal leads the applause at designated moments. The reduced fee for entrance was a strong temptation to our modest purses, but Cocles argued that in selling our approval or bartering our right of criticism we destroyed the value of the one or the other; so we bravely paid the full price of admission, which in the *parterre* is fortunately small, and many a delightful evening we spent, occasionally together, but more often with others of the "bande."

Before resuming the erratic course of my narrative, I must tell the sad fifth and last act of my whimsical friend's tragicomedy of life. This was enacted in the years that lapsed between my student days, my return home, and a second sojourn in France in 1886. On occasions, in mood of sentiment, Cocles had spoken of a young girl whom he had known since childhood, who lived with one of the few relatives that he possessed, and who, he averred, was to crown his life with happiness in that future when some great work achieved by him had brought fame and fortune. Fame and fortune —sorry jades—lingered, when, a short time after my first departure from Paris, the young people did as so

many young people do, and concluded to await the arrival of the tardy sisters in company. The marriage of Cocles spurred him, as it has done many an honest man, to greater effort, and under this influence he completed a group of sculpture which in some measure justified the expectations that his faithful friends had so long maintained. Already, however, the privations which his course in life had brought were beginning to tell upon him, and the Salon medal which promptly rewarded his first ambitious effort, was of the third class only, when his hope had been for one of higher grade.

It is the curse of official recompense to art in France that these rewards so often fail in their object. Their chief value is in provoking means for further production through government orders, and, of course, the lowest grade of medal comes last when the distribution of official work takes place.

After so much laughter, the progressive illness and the disappointment at the result of his effort changed the character of my friend, and, for the few years remaining, he avoided and distrusted his former comrades, and did little or nothing to add to his first partial success. When the end came, an end lightened by the knowledge that his wife, fortunately, was possessed of skill in a trade where, left alone, she would be abundantly able to support herself, there was a brief, transitory revival of the spirit of former days. On the last morning—as it was tearfully told me—he called his wife to his side and with fast-failing strength recalled many of their pleasant excursions and long rambles through the country. At last he asked to be lifted in

his bed, and as she stooped to help him, he burst into a verse of Murgers' song:

Tu remettras la robe blanche,
Dont tu te parais autrefois,
Et comme autrefois—le Dimanche—
Nous irons courir dans les bois,

and as he sang—as he had lived—he died, "babbling of green fields"; not perhaps a heroic figure, but one consistent and upheld through life by the courage of his convictions.

VII

JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET

THE irregularity with which these random recollections come back to me was perhaps sufficiently indicated by the inclusion in the last chapter of my long description of two of my French friends who were not particularly identified with our life in Barbizon, where they both, however, made short apparitions. Now, however, before going on with the memories of the summer of 1875, I must go backward to the two previous summers, for during my first sojourn there I made the acquaintance of Jean François Millet, and even so slight a contribution as mine to the knowledge of the world of so great a man is not without importance.

Before leaving New York on one of my journeys home to my native city of Albany, I remember straining my eyes in the fading twilight as, seated in the train, I read for the first time of the peasant painter in an article by Eugene Benson in the now long defunct "Appleton's Journal." The details of the article I have forgotten, but there must have been in it some insistent appeal, for my heart leaped up when, on the very first day of my arrival in Paris, I saw in a dealer's window a small picture by Millet, one of the nude nymphs whose company he deserted when he went to Barbizon in 1848. In the succeeding weeks I saw a number of other works by the master, for I early found

"The young Sarah Bernhardt" to whose "voice of gold" we listened in 1873

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

my way to the hospitable galleries of Durand-Ruel, who, almost alone in Paris at the time, had the courage to display his work, and in whose handsome rooms a student appeared to find a welcome not always vouchsafed by other dealers.

When, after reaching Barbizon by the roundabout route of Recloses, as I have already described, I found myself with Wyatt Eaton, domiciled in a couple of rooms and a studio, which a thrifty peasant had built over his house on the village street, and realized that a few doors away this, to me, greatest of modern painters lived, the desire to know him rose uppermost in my thoughts. Eaton, who had been longer in Barbizon than I, was no less desirous, but was less hopeful of our being able to accomplish our purpose, as he had heard many stories of the great man's inaccessibility.

The great painter never came near Sirons, where we took our meals, and in fact I rarely saw him on the village street; his garden communicating with the fields and the forest in which he walked by preference. His son and namesake, a painter of about our age, was, however, occasionally at Siron's; his acquaintance we made, and, to our request that we might know his father, he consentingly promised to arrange a meeting. Before this, however, I had in my journeys between our lodging and the hotel frequent glimpses of Millet in his home through the window which opened on the street. This room was level with the ground, and served as the dining-room of Millet and his numerous brood, and the picture presented to the passer-by might well be of the composition of the master, who, seated at the head of his table, seemed the very prototype of

the patriarch. It was a pleasant first sight of one whose miseries, pinching and true enough at times in his career, have been given too much prominence in Sensier's otherwise authoritative biography. Much insistence has also been placed on Millet's peasant birth by those who ignore or forget that the intellectual health of France is constantly alimented by this strong and vigorous stock. The country even to-day is largely agricultural, devoted to culture on a small scale where man remains close to nature in his daily toil; a retention of quasi-primitive conditions which we have lost in our immense tracts cultivated by machinery, where the farmer is more familiar with profit and loss as shown by his ledger than he is with the furrow through which he drives the plough. The arts particularly appear to recruit their practitioners from the peasant class, but, as shown in Millet's case as in many others, the pursuit of their studies, the elevation of thought imposed by their vocation, soon lifts them from the level of the beasts of the field, to whom, with many antique virtues to his share, the peasant is closely allied. This characterization is not unjust, applied by one who has counted many friends among them and who has a hearty admiration for the class as it may still be found in France. The dominant characteristic of the peasant is his love for the soil, from which he has wrested not only his living, but by the practice of an economy, so intense that one can with difficulty realize it to be humanly possible, he has put aside something for the proverbial "rainy day." This is generally applied to the acquisition of more land, frequently only a few square feet being added to his holding from year to

year, but the equally strong trait of his people, the sense of the solidarity of the family, will loose his purse-strings at the call of a pronounced vocation for higher pursuits on the part of any member of his family. Paris always numbers among her students many sprung from such a source, supported wholly or in part by fathers and mothers to whom the printed word is unintelligible, but whose hoarding is thus cheerfully dispersed at the call of an imperious vocation which they only vaguely understand. Many a bachelor of sciences or letters returns in his vacations to eat the parental soup in a room with an earthen floor, surrounded by an admiring family who can hardly speak, much less read or write, their native language. One of my French comrades, as an excuse for his absence from a student gathering, pleaded one day that he was obliged to take a lesson in French as he had just won the Prix de Rome; "and now," he added, "as I must meet well-educated people, I must learn to speak my language correctly."

Millet, whose great-uncle was a priest, who, at the abolition of his curacy at the time of the French Revolution, had returned to the cultivation of the soil, was more fortunate than many, for, at the hands of this good man, he had received a solid instruction in letters, tinctured even with the classics in Latin. His family, indeed, as may occasionally be found among the peasants, were superior in mind to their class, and when, driven from Paris by the cholera in 1848, he came to Barbizon, there was nothing in common between him and the peasant inhabitants of the village. He and his family were looked upon as *bourgeois* from

the first, and to be of that class without an assured income is to be viewed with suspicion in any French village. Hence the very genuine hardship by which the whilom peasant and his family were assailed, for the sturdy common-sense of the father demanded good and plentiful food for his growing family, of which there were eventually nine children, and caused them to be regarded as demanding luxuries without the ready money to pay for them. But it must not be forgotten that Millet's industry, even at the small prices which his work then commanded, brought sufficient at most times to support his family in a comfort unknown to his neighbours; and we find in Sensier's life many letters of the master which show purchases of engravings, photographs, and the like; necessities of his craft, to be sure, but not likely to be acquired by the half-starved peasant of the legend which has grown up about Millet.

At the time when I first went to Barbizon the family had long outgrown the suspicion and jealousy from which they had suffered, and though living scrupulously apart, not only from their peasant neighbours, but from the few resident artists, they were universally regarded with respect. The Millet house, its gable to the street and its entrance through the garden wall, by which it was joined to the studio, was a structure of a single story, picturesque and cosy enough in appearance. I remember at the time thinking it an ideal home for an artist, but from a modern hygienic standpoint, rheumatism and perhaps graver ills lurked in its recesses.

It was, and has remained, a memorable day when the green gate into the garden was opened to me for

the first time by François Millet. Entering, I turned to the left toward the studio. The son hurriedly explained to me that his father was suffering from one of the headaches to which he was subject, but had insisted on rising from his bed to receive the young American student. Naturally I drew back and protested against intrusion on his father at such a time; but, as I spoke, the elder man advanced.

He was of large frame and tall stature, the eyes of an artist deep set with the frontal bone well developed, a strong and prominent nose and abundant beard, which did not entirely conceal his mouth; firmly drawn yet gravely kind in expression. A drawing which I endeavoured to make some time afterward, from one of the rare photographs taken of him (loaned me by one of his brothers), is not unlike him, although it gives an aspect which he only had when dressed in city clothes, as on his rare visits to Paris. Clad in a knitted coat, not unlike the cardigan jacket which was familiar here at one time, closely buttoned to the waist, and well-worn trousers, his appearance was that of the peaceful provincial in France who, secure from the public gaze behind his garden wall, dresses for ease and comfort. The legend of the peasant's sabots worn by him has only this much of truth, that in the heavy dews on the plain, or in bad weather at any time, he wore sabots out of doors, as most country people do in France; as a foot covering that, after a little practice, is not difficult to walk with; which protects from dampness, and is easily slipped off on entering within doors.

Between my timidity, the little French I possessed, and

the master's evident suffering, our first interview began badly enough; my chief preoccupation being to find an excuse for withdrawing quickly. But as it progressed the interest of Millet grew as he would display, from canvases stacked against the wall, pictures in various stages of progress. There were many of these, for it was his habit to begin many things, often as a memory of something he had seen would arise, and lay them aside to be taken up and carried further, then laid aside once again as his interest was given elsewhere. His method almost invariably was to indicate a composition lightly in charcoal, seldom, at least at that time, having recourse to nature, and never from a model posing; his work from life consisting generally in a strongly accented drawing almost in outline. When the composition was finally arranged to his satisfaction, he drew in the figures and its principal lines, using a thick quill pen, with ink. Upon this, with semi-transparent colour, he would prepare the principal tones of his picture. A canvas thus prepared he would set aside to dry, returning to it later with more direct painting in opaque tones, gradually refining its colour and rendering its effect to the point of completion.

An art student at the point of advancement which was mine at the time, is a creature filled with half-digested beliefs and crude principles, absorbed from limited experience; and I remember questioning to myself, although I warmly approved of the result, if the means employed by this great painter were those which were thought consistent with the best modern practice. Slavish adherence to nature was then and after the watchword of the school, and, as many do, I

J. F. Millet

From a drawing by W. H. Low

confounded the practice of the school with that of the mature artist; forgetting that in one is learned the handling of the tools, and that the other represents the result of such study in the production of the master-craftsman. Some question of this kind I ventured to make, asking how in the studio lighted by a single window he could study the model as the figure would be lit out-of-doors. For reply he showed me a drawing, a mere quick-sketch, as I fear even other zealous followers of Gérôme, among whose pupils I was numbered at the time, would not have hesitated to judge; but now, to my better understanding, appearing, as I remember it, to have the indication of all the essential construction of the figure that the master, with his knowledge of form, needed to work from. The answer to my question appeared to me, however, enigmatic; and Millet, speaking slowly and with much emphasis, explained that a figure arrested in movement and with muscles relaxed demanded at the best on the part of the artist a memory of the appearance of the figure in action; that for him the weary imitation of a posed model seemed less true, less like nature, than to follow a hasty sketch with added truths garnered from a long and close observation, aided by the memory of the relation between a figure and its background under certain effects of light.

In my own efforts, especially during the two years in New York in drawing for illustration, I had noticed that I could frequently draw a better figure from memory than from nature; or at least, by discarding a drawing made from a model, could repeat the drawing from memory and infuse it with more life than my first

study possessed. I ventured to speak of this, and Millet said: "If you have that faculty it is fortunate, and is one that you should cultivate; but perhaps it is best for you at present not to depend too much upon it; you tell me that you are in the Atelier Gérôme; there, or wherever you work, think only of rendering the model as truthfully as you can; it is by such practice that you will familiarize your eye to see and your mind to retain the construction and the proportion of the human figure, and later on you will be able, through such knowledge, to be the master and not the slave of the chance individual model who serves you, and give to your work the typical rather than the accidental character of nature." If I put this answer in quotation marks, it is with no pretense of repeating Millet's words; on the contrary, that great man, for the benefit of the humble student unfamiliar with his language, took the trouble to repeat his phrases, to speak slowly, to vary the form of what he said when he saw that I did not thoroughly understand. I have always felt that something of his earnestness, in a partially hypnotic fashion, penetrated my understanding, despite the unfamiliarity to me of the language which he spoke, though it had then been for some months my only medium of communication with my new found French friends.

By this time I own I had forgotten the headache from which Millet was suffering, and so, in my own excuse, I am certain had he, for he continued as he talked to show me various pictures; once I remember saying, reflectively, before one of them: "Not so bad; it is a good thing not to see your work for six months," denot-

ing the time that that particular picture had been turned to the wall, perhaps in temporary discouragement.

I saw that day many of the pictures which formed the collection sold at the Hôtel Drouot after the master's death, eighteen months after—some of them left as I had seen them, others carried to further completion.

Upon an easel during all this time my glance had rested from time to time on what was evidently a large picture covered by drapery thrown over it. At length Millet asked me to step back, placing me behind a curtain hung to a rod which projected at right angles to the window, so that to a person standing there the window was entirely hidden. Then he removed the drapery, allowing the light from the window to fall directly on the picture; and a surprising thing occurred.

Ever since I have had consciousness of life, I believe that I have been looking at pictures. At that time I had seen many, and, since then, many, many more; but before or since no picture has produced upon me the exact effect of that which I then saw. I looked out on a plain with apple-trees in blossom, on either side of a tortuous road which ran to high woods in the distance. The plain was in mingled light and cloud shadow, and the wooded distance, strongly illumined, showed bright against a clearing storm-sky, a portion of which was traversed by a rainbow.

The picture is well known; is now in the Louvre, where on many occasions since I have studied it with continuing admiration, but with no trace of the amazing sensation I experienced on that day. For then *I did not realize that it was a painted canvas.* As a picture, it has little of the photographic realism with which

many painters have endowed their work; it has nothing of the factitious relief which the French term *trompe-l'œil*, such as we know in the familiar panorama or the clever scenic realism of the stage. Nor was my feeling exactly that of looking on a real scene, so much as that I was, by the magic of the painter's art, lifted out of myself and made to realize the poignant sensation of the reawakening of nature in the spring. To one who compares the picture reproduced in these pages with what I here endeavour to describe, my words probably convey but little meaning, and I can only say that I was so moved, so shaken in my entire being, that I made at the time no effort to describe my feeling to the painter, as, barely able to control my emotion, I left him.

I have since endeavoured to explain to myself this episode, unique in my life's experience, by the plausible reason that throughout the afternoon, in my tense desire to follow from one beautiful work to another the great painter's intention, I had fairly surrendered all my sentient nature to his effort. When at the last this masterwork was shown me, the method of its production faded before my mind, and the evocation of the spirit of the scene alone remained.

In the few remaining weeks of my stay that summer I saw the master twice more; once in his son's studio where there was a large picture, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which was left unfinished at his death. It is a life-sized figure of a young peasant girl with distaff hanging loosely in her hands, her head upthrown, shaded by a large straw hat in dark relief against a luminous sky. To my exclamation that for

Spring.

From the painting in the Louvre by J. F. Millet.

a figure of this size he must surely have used a model, the patient artist jestingly assured me that the only direct study of nature was of a tuft of grass in the foreground, "which I plucked in the field, brought into the studio, and *copied*," with an insistence on the last word. Before returning to Paris at the end of the summer, I again sought Millet; this time for advice to resolve a question which had an important bearing on my future, and which was presented in so flattering a manner that it was most tempting; though my better reason sought strength to put it aside by confirmation from Millet.

I must here explain that among the many picturesque and mysterious characters who in those days dwelt in Barbizon, there was a certain lady whose name, if I knew it at the time, I have forgotten, but who was generally designated by the simple title of the "Countess." Whether this rank was hers by right, what her real station in life may have been, I know not; but, for more than a year she inhabited a detached building containing a few living rooms and a large studio, which had been built on the plain outside the village by a well-known animal painter, Brendel by name. In 1870–'71, at the time of the Franco-Prussian war, as the painter was of the hated nationality, he had found it more agreeable to live elsewhere, and though the large and fine studio was looked upon with covetous eyes by a number of the painters, it now served as a habitation for the Countess and her dogs. Of these she had at least a dozen, and at all times in all weathers we met her on the plain or in the forest, accompanied by her canine friends; with whom she communicated in a strange, guttural language, which was not German, but

which was unknown to us all. Elsewhere than in Barbizon she would have excited a more vivid curiosity, but the inhabitants of the village and its artist frequenters were inured to all species of eccentricity, and the latter especially, busy with their work, were past masters in the art of minding their own business. Beyond these casual encounters in my walks, I had not otherwise seen this lady or held communication with her, when, one morning in the little studio which I shared with Eaton, who happened to be away at the time, she entered unannounced. Without preamble, upon my inquiring the reason for the honour of her visit, she informed me that in a few days the painter Munkacsy would arrive in Barbizon for the summer; that there was no suitable studio to be had for him; and that I would be doing no more than my duty to vacate the one which I occupied with my friend, and place it at his disposition. Somewhat staggered at this extraordinary proposition, I mildly explained that I had begun certain work in the studio, that my own industry would be suspended if I vacated it; that Eaton was also to be consulted, and that, in brief, to my great regret, I saw no possibility of our accepting her genial suggestion. "But," she urged, "Munkacsy is a very great artist—*très grand peintre*—and you and your friend," with a circling regard for our works by which I sat surrounded, "are only students." Finally, more amused than angry, I bethought me of a studio in another house, of which I found she did not know, and despatched her thither.

In a few days Munkacsy arrived, occupied the studio which his fair friend had secured for him, and took his

meals with us at Siron's *table d'hôte*. Beyond the ordinary amenities of the table I saw little of him, until, one day when I had waited in vain an hour or more for the appearance of Madame Richard, my favourite model among the peasant women, I went to her home, to find that she had gone to pose for Munkacsy. "*Vous comprenez, Monsieur*," suavely explained her husband, "that he pays her two francs the hour, while you only pay one." The price that I paid was the recognized tariff, but I knew that any plea that a promise given or an engagement made was binding was useless here, and so with fire in my eye I sought the studio of Munkacsy, where I found Madame Richard placidly posing —curiously enough—for the peasant woman in the picture of the "*Mont de Piété*," now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

A few earnest words gave Munkacsy an understanding of the situation, and he became at once apologetic; and then and there we arrived at an agreement by which we could share the services of the model, by making engagements on different days. The early success of Munkacsy in the Salon, with his "Last Day of a Condemned Man," was then comparatively recent, and had been repeated in some degree in the succeeding exhibitions. Immediately after the war the Paris Salon opened its doors to many foreign painters, and of these Munkacsy, though of German training, was by far the most favoured.

Like all students, a Salon success counted for me in those days as a permanent title to fame, and, as his later career gave ample confirmation, the Hungarian painter had many of the qualities that go to make the

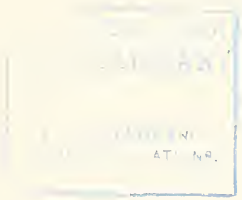
great artist. I was therefore considerably elated when, a few days after, he came to see me in my little studio, and gave me valuable criticism upon my work. He accompanied his strictures with praise which even then appeared exaggerated, though I did not at the time appreciate, as I do now, that it was a part of the impetuousness of manner, which was marked in his every word or action. Thereafter he made me frequent visits, and, of course, we saw each other constantly at the hotel.

It was then my intention to return at the close of the summer to the *atelier Gérôme*, and, with many shrugs of the shoulders and protestations that my master might be a great artist, might be this or might be that, might be all that I claimed him to be, "but not a painter, no, not a painter, *du tout, du tout, du tout*," he essayed to dissuade me from returning to study with him. Naturally his words had weight, and when, later, with much earnestness, he assured me that with my faculty for composition I would do better to take a studio and produce pictures, arranging my subjects so that every element could be closely studied from nature, and in this way acquire by constant practice the knowledge which I sought in the school, the proposition seemed most alluring. The vision of a place of my own, the possibility of arriving at my desired result in my own way, and my absolute ignorance of the many difficulties, material and æsthetic, of such a course made the prospect distinctly enchanting. Fortunately, I had a residuum of common-sense, and I finally put the question to Millet. I found, rather to my surprise, that he was absolutely ignorant of the position which

Maternal cares

From a painting by W. H. Low in the possession of G. H. Thacher, Esq., Albany, N. Y.

This, my first work in France, was the picture on which I was engaged at Barbizon in the Autumn of '73, and which caused Munkacsy to advise my desertion of school work, as described on p. 44.]



Munkacsy had already acquired, the Salon in his isolation occupying him but little. But upon the main point of my problem he was almost vehemently emphatic in its condemnation. "What would you think of a poet arrested in his composition by a question of grammar?" he inquired. "The school affords the easiest way of continually studying from nature. The casts from antique statues stand still for you to learn the structure of the human figure; the models, trained as they are, are almost equally in the same manner at the disposition of the student, who must laboriously acquire this knowledge. It does not matter so much who the master may be, every one should listen to the dictates of his nature and follow them"—here, perhaps, he was thinking of his own revolt in the *atelier Delaroche*, where, reproached with studies apparently hewn out of wood, he had retorted that the figures of the more approved students of the master were made "of butter and honey"—"but continuous study from nature is the only salvation. Look at the antique, study the masters in the Louvre to see what these men have done with the knowledge which they have gained by their study—the elements of style, the suppression of detail which is detrimental to the typical character which you must endeavour always to bear in mind when you are trying to make a picture; but, when you are making a study in the school, copy slavishly all that is individual, even that which you may think ugly; and, from the accumulation of such information as you gain of the varieties of the human form, you will learn what will best serve you when you wish to express your own individual view of nature."

This time I fully understood, though, again, I only repeat the sense and not the textual words of the master as they were then crystallized in my memory; and with a wiser head, though perhaps not altogether a lighter heart, prepared again to take up my studies in the school.

I have been thus explicit in relating this incident in detail, because I believe that it may prove useful. Our habit of arriving at results quickly works no greater havoc in any department of our national intellectual effort than in our art. The many brilliant *débuts* of American painters in the past generation and the rarer confirmation of their promise is sufficiently marked. It is not, I believe, the American artist, taken as a type, so much as his environment that is at fault. Parents and influential friends begin with the neophyte in the student stage to demand prompt results, and our public is for the most part indifferent to the slow progress by which a definite expression is achieved; and as quickly as an artist has shown, in early and immature work, the possession of talent, he may be extravagantly lauded. If he is a man of parts, he affronts new endeavour with the laudable desire to deserve his success, and by earnest effort produces work retaining his first qualities and adding others; only to be accused of "repeating himself." Baffled—with the knowledge that Raphael, Velasquez, *e tutti quanti* made no other progress than by repeating themselves with continual added qualities—he is pushed aside, and the fickle public turns to the newcomer with its welcome—and most necessary—encouragement; reserving the right to dethrone him in turn, and so on to the end of the chapter.

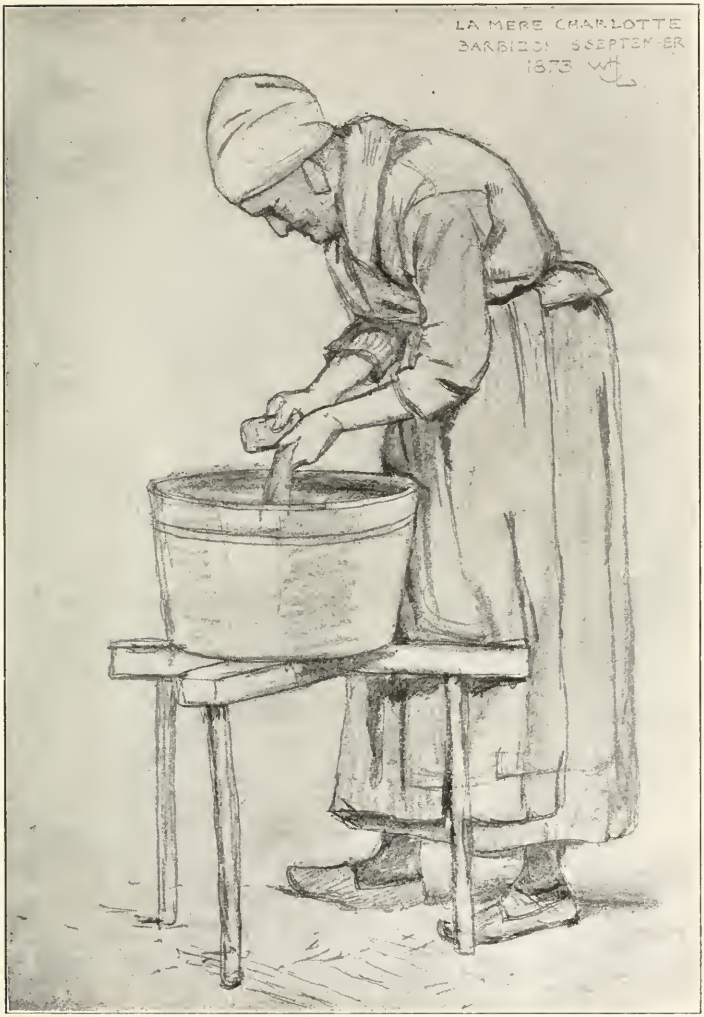
Happy the land that knows that art is long, and happy the man who, like Jean François Millet, lives his life in full acceptance of this truth, and, with the unceasing industry of the coral-insect, adds day by day the essential quota to his life fabric. Another great Frenchman, the sculptor Rude, has said that the only real misfortune that can befall an artist is interruption to his work, "*La grande chose pour un artiste—c'est de faire.*"

It is somewhat curious that all that Millet said to me, all that produced so strong an impression on his hearer, was in total ignorance of what my work might be; for so conscious of its shortcomings was I that, though he asked me to bring my studies to him more than once, I never dared to do so, even when in the following year he permitted me to visit his studio quite frequently. There were many minor technical questions which he willingly answered to my eager inquiry, but it is probable that the more general statements, which I have endeavoured to reproduce, formed part of his belief which, living, especially in his later years, a solitary life—the earlier comrades, his fellow-giants of the Barbizon school, being gone—he had formulated in his mind; and my presence and my problems simply offered a pretext for their utterance.

VIII

PEASANTS AND PAINTERS

BARBIZON had, in the days of which I write, few distinctive features as a village. It may be to-day, as an agglomeration of villas, more like a certain type of pleasure resort common in France than it was typical as a village then, though, with my old love for the place, I have never dared to disturb my memories by visiting it since 1886. It sufficed on a recent trip abroad when, coming up from Italy, I looked out as the train made its stop at Melun, and saw a trolley car with Barbizon-Chailly marking its destination in large letters. Profanation of profanations! this mechanical contrivance replaces the old yellow omnibus which for so many years carried the hopes, ambitions, and the persons of generations of artists to the village. A long street, lacking even the village church which nearly every village in France possesses, ran from the plain to the gate of the forest. Beyond the absolutely necessary *bureau de tabac*, where some few other articles were sold, there were no shops even. The peasants in my comparatively late day, for when I knew it Millet alone remained of all his famous group, had received but little impress from the artistic frequenters of the village, and in the case of the older people remained as primitive as though the great city of light was in another hemisphere, rather than ten leagues distant.



La Mère Charlotte—my landlady in Barbizon

La Mère Charlotte, as the village knew her, was the owner of the house where Eaton and I lodged, mistress rather in every sense of the word, for her more easy-going husband, Pierre, sang in a minor key in the matrimonial duet. Bent nearly double with the hard work, which from four in the morning until dark occupied the mother Charlotte, she refused, though she dearly loved money, to stop in her incessant toil to pose for me. "*Voyez vous*," she said with a sort of terror, "I must keep moving; at my age, if I should stop, I should die." But she willingly proposed her husband, no whit her junior, as a substitute. To watch from the vantage of the studio window the *mère* Charlotte purchase from the ambulant butcher, who drove over from the neighbouring village of Chailly, her Sunday dinner was a lesson in the value of centimes as a factor of commerce. The butcher, an opponent worthy of her steel, was more than often vanquished at the end, when, with a cry like the rapacious hawk, the bent old woman triumphantly bore away some inconsiderable scrap of meat more than that for which she paid. The *pot au feu* on Sunday was to the villagers virtually all the meat that their meagre larders knew throughout the week, the food of the other six days consisting only of soup, bread, and wine.

But once was this order changed in Charlotte's family, on the occasion of her daughter's marriage. Pierre and Charlotte were reputed rich, as fortunes were counted among the peasants, and the force of public opinion overcame their avarice. For three days the festival continued; a table spread with profusion stood for all that time under the great *porte cochère* that led under

our studio into the courtyard between the house and the barns. There was almost continual dancing in the court, or long walks were undertaken through the fields to neighbouring hamlets, led by musicians, two violins and a fife, followed by bride and groom, and after them the wedding guests, consisting of about all the peasant population of Barbizon who, from age or participation in the ceremonies, were able to walk. A charming picture they made, too, in their quaint Sunday finery threading their way through the paths among the standing wheat on the plain.

Ah, certainly, Barbizon was forced to acknowledge *la mère* Charlotte did things well! but meanwhile the ancient dame was the most unhappy of mortals. No work was being done, and money was being expended! Upon the last evening, the fun still furious, and the reeling couples in the courtyard dancing with unabated enthusiasm, she approached her husband. He, poor soul, was enjoying himself with some welcome sense of repose from the unceasing toil where he was ordinarily forced to keep pace with his wife. Pierre stood in starched shirt, his hands behind his back, smiling at the scene before him, while his weak old head nodded time to the music. Conscious of the force of public opinion, and knowing that she was powerless to make effective protest, the rancour of her contained wrath broke out as she parodied her husband's attitude and action, and fairly hissed: "*Pierre, Pierre, t'es comme ça!*"

With her rapacity, however, I always found her strictly honest, though it was not altogether pleasant in our financial transactions to find that she had no

such confidence in me. For some years after the Franco-Prussian war paper money was used, bills for five, ten, and twenty francs upward being current. Mother Charlotte, who could neither read nor write, was unable to accustom herself to these notes. Gold and silver, by life-long habit and a species of intuition, she knew; but when paper money was presented she invariably took it to her kitchen table where, incised in the wood, were lines conforming to the rectangles of the various notes. She knew the dimensions alone of each note, whose face remained blank to her understanding.

The old woman never ventured far from home, her courtyard and the fields she possessed on the plain back of her garden, where with knitting in hand she daily led her cow to pasture, the cow being held by a cord to prevent trespass on a neighbour's grass, were the extent of her journeys. On one occasion she asked me how Monsieur Masson's new house, of which she had heard, was progressing. As the house in question stood a few hundred yards distant I expressed some surprise, thinking that she might have seen its progress for herself, but she assured me, and I have no doubt but that it was true, that for ten years she had not gone the short length of the village street, despite that at least sixteen of the twenty-four hours she was on her feet and in movement. Equally strange to me was her answer when I asked the meaning of a word I had heard one day in Macheron, a hamlet less than a mile away. "How should I know," she answered, "they talk quite differently in Macheron from the way we do in Barbizon, and, besides, I've not been in Macheron

since I was a young girl." Differing from this aged ruminant, Madame Richard rises to my memory. Also a somewhat bovine creature, yet amply proportioned, fully six feet in height, with large, placid eyes set under finely arched brows, this good woman might stand for a type of mother-earth. There were numerous little Richards, maternity scarcely causing a ripple, I imagine, in the placid current of the lives of this couple. The husband, though a fit male for this rustic Juno, was of less pronounced type, but to see them together in their ordinary life was to approach closely to primitive conditions. They were of the poorer class of peasants, though each year as I returned to Barbizon I was perforce conducted to view some new addition to their landed property, each new acquisition being possibly as large as the backyard of a city house. Their own thatch-covered house contained but one large room, where at nightfall the couple and their brood nested; how it was difficult to comprehend. In the day all the operations of household-life were carried on there and, as is not unusual, there were one or two pieces of furniture, part of their heritage undoubtedly, that were handsome and of good style. In this *ménage* the husband worked in the fields, as during the summer, except in time of harvest, when every able-bodied inhabitant was enrolled for the *récolte*, his handsome wife could add more to the family income by posing for the artists.

Munkacsy's figure in the picture already spoken of gives but little of her ample beauty, and in my two early works shown here my inexperience enabled me to realize it but feebly. One of these pictures has a slight

Home-made Bread

From the painting by Will H. Low, in the possession of Mrs. J. Victor Onativia, New York.

story connected with it, which, as I write, warns me that my admiration for this strong, simple, and natural creature may not fall in all cases on sympathetic ears. To its first owner, an early patron of my youthful efforts, I once described this couple, and told how, as in some cave inhabited by giants, I had seen one or the other in mere pleasantry deliver a blow that would knock down an ordinary mortal, and which even with these powerful creatures would send the one that received it reeling half across the room. This entirely without anger, on the contrary, as the semblance of an awkward caress. And in like manner, though in a blaze of anger, one of the sturdy children would receive a forcible demonstration of the weight of the mother's hand, to be devoured with kisses the next instant by the purely instinctive woman. Undoubtedly her manners lacked the repose "that marks the caste of Vere de Vere," but I was hardly prepared for the effect of my narration, when I learned long after that the possessor of my picture promptly disposed of it, "rather than own," as he expressed it shudderingly, "the picture of such a brute." But if in many ways she was like the lowly kine, or even the mated tigress, she was not without a certain dignity, nor in her simple ignorance did she lack feminine sympathy; as once when I responded negatively to her query if my home in my own country was like Barbizon, near enough a forest for my people to glean faggots for the winter fire, "I pity you," she said, "it must be a poor country." Civilization under the Republic must also have a softening effect on natures like these, for the last time I saw Madame Richard, some twenty years ago, she gave me detailed news of

her numerous family. Aline was in service in Melun, Hortense and Lucie were married, Alphonse was apprenticed to a *charcutier* in Paris, "and my four little ones that you have never seen, are at school to-day. I wish you would have seen them this morning," she added proudly; "I dressed them all in their sailor suits, for the school was to be photographed, and they were all *bien jolis*." Shades of the Belle Jardinière and its ready-made clothing, my primitive Barbizon and its cave-dwellers had come to this under the auspices of the third Republic. I would like to linger over my memories of the Poacher, or describe *la belle Clarisse*, who was of another and much superior type, a *jeune fille*, almost *bien élevée* even, according to the standards of much higher society, but memory portraits of unfamiliar types may spell fatigue for my reader.

The French artist contingent in Barbizon, either residents or habitual visitors, presented also a great diversity of character. Perhaps the most prominent of these was Olivier de Penne, who lived on the other side of the forest at Marlotte, though scarce a week went by without his soldier-like figure, erect on his horse, being seen at Siron's. Dismounting, his stay would at times be prolonged for days. From listening to him, I fancy that I arrived at a better understanding of the amazing adventure of the Second Empire, which dazzled France for eighteen years, than I could have acquired in any other manner. His tales of the court at Fontainebleau, his openly expressed scepticism of the existence of truth or honour in French politics—since so handsomely disproved, though the way of the Republic has been thorny; the whole attitude of the

House of the Belle Clarisse, Barbizon, 1875

"La Belle Clarisse" was a charming young girl, a relative of Mme. Siron, whose person and habitation were thus christened, quite without her knowledge

man compelled interest. Like many others, he was not so black as he was painted by his own hand, and, as for his actual painting, many collections here and in France count his clever water-colours, of hounds and huntsmen in the green forest on the borders of which he lived, as choice possessions. Fancy near him at Siron's table, a gentleman, bearded like a pard, fairly bristling with black hair, eyebrows, moustache and beard; dressed in a scarlet coat as an upper garment; a good fellow despite his startling appearance, and a good painter—Albert de Gesne. Next him appeared, perhaps, the low-voiced and retiring Petitjean, who had decorated the palaces of many multi-millionaires in various vague South American republics, from which he had finally, escaping the daily revolutions, wrested a small competence and had retired to Barbizon. He it was who was entrusted with the perilous duty of making the salad; no light task in the face of some forty critics, each of whom considered his manner the only possible one of doing justice to that delicate concoction. Petitjean always prefaced his undertaking with "Gentlemen, shall it be a *salade Ingres* or a *salade Delacroix?*" If the latter, he rose from the table and brought from some hidden receptacle strange condiments of spices and peppers which had grown under the Southern sun of the countries which he had visited. The *salade Ingres*, on the contrary, was severe in structure, a trifle too vinegary for my taste, but undoubtedly classic in its proportions, and fairly academic in comparison with the aromatically romantic *salade Delacroix*.

In these earlier days, at the time when the coffee was

served, we would see enter the handsome and genial Gaston La Fenestre, who lived in the village with his widowed mother. Readers of Stevenson's "Inland Voyage" will remember the touching allusion to this gallant painter, who, a few months after, was taken away in mid-winter by rapid consumption. More than one of us felt the following summer saddened by his absence from our expeditions to the Caverne des Brigands, where his hunting-horn was wont to wake the echoes of the night.

There were a number of others whose names alone survive in my memory, and whose individualities are even less marked, who lived in the village and frequented its inn. As everything was conducted by Siron and his wife on a basis of confidence in their guests, I fear that strict allotment of charges was seldom arrived at. The billiard-room was decorated by a long line of silhouettes of the various frequenters of the inn, executed by the simple process of filling in with black the shadow of the head, cast upon the wall from a lighted candle. If they had not been effaced long ago, portraits of all who figure in these pages, and many more, could be found there. There were no very pronounced devotees of the game of billiards, but the room was the nightly resort, not only of the lodgers of the inn, but of the resident painters whom, from the supposedly somnolent existence of some of them, we irreverently called "snoozers."

The Sirons were early abed, while their guests remained late, for the doors of the inn, I imagine, were never locked. Early in the evening Siron would approach the shelves in one corner of the room, whereon

reposed numerous bottles filled with cognac, kirsch, or other liqueurs, and make a mental calculation of their contents, at the same time noting those of his guests who happened to be present. The next morning he would revisit the bottles, calculate the diminution of their contents, impartially divide the quantity consumed by the number of men in the room the night before at his bedtime, and charge its cost under the mysterious name of "estrats" on their bills. This habit of the early retirement of the host being perfectly well known to certain of the "snoozers," who also counted among the largest of the consumers of "estrats," these gentlemen habitually managed to arrive after the calculation described above had taken place, and consequently were never charged with their spirituous refreshment; a thrifty habit which amused their long-suffering fellows, who paid for this vicarious stimulant without protest.

Two other resident painters followed the example of Millet in shunning our rather noisy society at the inn, one of these a Frenchman, the other, although residing in France since 1848, an American. The French painter, La Chèvre by name, was a man of some little fortune, of excellent family, and considerable talent. In his profession he was, however, quite without ambition, and at the time when, with the two Stevensons, I was often at his house, one large picture, on which he had worked for years, and which was quite evidently never to be finished, furnished him with the sole pretext to industry in his vocation that his other intellectual pursuits demanded. He read English, and told us that, at one time, he could converse fluently in our

language, though, in those days, he could never be persuaded to speak anything but French. He had, however, a quite extraordinary knowledge of our literature, and many an evening was spent pleasantly at his house. A pupil of Jules Dupré, he had known many of the greater men of his time and had evidently in his youth—he was then a man past sixty—travelled much. His house and manner of living, for so simple a place as Barbizon, betokened the well-to-do man of the world, and often a rare bottle of wine, oysters, or some dainty from Paris, would provide a fitting end to an evening spent in discussing French or English books.

During these evenings, joining but little in our talk, Madame La Chèvre sat by, rolling cigarettes with plump though shapely hands, the waxen fingers working deftly, twisting a pinch of tobacco into its thin rice-paper covering, twirling the ends to prevent the cigarettes unrolling, and tossing the finished product into a large bowl on the table before us, from which we helped ourselves. The pallor of her hands spread over the placid face, which more than our imagination endowed with a conventual aspect; for many years before she had, with the connivance and at the call of her lover, escaped from a convent. The sacrilegious renunciation of her vows had effectually prevented their union from becoming regularized, for the laws of France forbid marriage without the consent of parents at any age of the contracting parties, except that, after attaining majority, the child may serve a legal notice of the intention to marry upon the parents, and, after three repetitions of this ceremony, the marriage may take place. But so strong are the ties of family in

France, that this extremity of serving these *sommations respectueuses*—respectful summons—is seldom resorted to, and so this couple, both well beyond middle life, were living in irregular union, because the aged mother of one of them would not consent to the legalization of her son's marriage. A more respectable couple it would be difficult to find, and when, some years after, the death of the mother, preceding only by a year or two that of her son, permitted him to regularize his situation, he did so promptly. When I last heard of his widow she had, in the words of my informant, become *dévote* and, completely reconciled to her church, was active in well doing.

To me she remains pictured in my memory as Anastasie in the "Treasure of Franchard," and I recall Stevenson's shout of elation years after when I told him of my instant recognition of his skilfully drawn portrait; while much of the Doctor's philosophy, in the same story, brought back memories of our long evenings in La Chèvre's hospitable house.

My American friend of long residence in Barbizon was William Babcock, a painter almost unknown in this country. Babcock was of Massachusetts birth, and went as a student to Paris about the same time as his friend, William Morris Hunt, in the late '40's. Unlike Hunt, who was to return and achieve reputation here, Babcock elected to remain in France. Living upon a modest income, he had managed to surround himself with many rare and beautiful works of art; and in their study and contemplation he had virtually forgotten the passage of time and the necessity of continuous effort in our proverbially difficult art. The

criticism relating to Washington Allston, that "he dreamed so industriously that he forgot the necessity of industry," applied with equal force to Babcock.

Through long living alone he had become a confirmed hypochondriac, and it was quite by chance that he consented to receive and to know Wyatt Eaton and myself, though in all our relations we found him most genial and pleasant. He maintained, however, only the most necessary relations with the villagers, and lived behind the walls of his pleasant garden as though entrenched in a fortress. He had first come to Barbizon to be near Millet, with whom he had lived on intimate terms for many years, when some fancied affront had given him offence, and the intimacy had ceased. To Millet's straightforward and simple nature the umbrageous disposition of the American was a sealed book, and learning from him that he deplored the cessation of the visits of "William," as he called him, Eaton and I at last prevailed upon our friend to go to Millet's house as though he had never ceased to visit there. This he did, with the result that the last months of Millet's life were cheered by Babcock's continued friendly offices, and at the end he was by the side of the great painter as he breathed his last.

Eaton and I were greatly favoured by the friendship of this recluse, for he was filled with the traditions of the men of the Barbizon school, and as he repeated their lessons his meaning was made clear by constant reference to drawings, colour-sketches, sketch-books, and engravings from their work, of which he had a store.

His own work was of an intensely personal character, narrowly missing greatness. He might be termed

colour-mad, so jewel-like and carried to its last intensity was every hue of his palette. Monticelli was in some respects a prototype, but Babcock's work, though perhaps never attaining the full compelling force of the Marseillais painter, had at times an almost Raphaelesque beauty of form. This quality, however, was only partial and was often devoid of a sense of proportion, so that a beautifully drawn arm might be almost twice too long for the figure to which it was attached. Few of his works survive, for he worked intermittently on a few canvases during all the time I knew him, though I never failed on my visits to France to seek him out, even when in the last years of his life he had left Barbizon and settled at St. Cyr near Paris, where he died a few years ago. Before his death he had disposed of the best of the examples of Millet and some of the other treasures which he had acquired in his early years in Paris; but several of his own works, together with engravings and sketches by men of the Barbizon school, he left as a legacy to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Curiously incomplete in his equipment as an artist, Babcock presents an example occasionally met with in our profession, where the cultivation of taste and appreciation outruns and paralyzes executive ability to such a degree that consecutive production becomes impossible. I have known him at the times of my sojourns in France, five or six years often elapsing between them, to place a small panel on his easel with the remark: "I think I have done something to this since you saw it last." Art is long, it is true, but my friend forgot that the artist is not eternal.

IX

PRE-STEVENSONIAN DAYS IN BARBIZON

AS it was not until late in the season of 1874 that Bob Stevenson entered as an active influence into my life, and as in the following year, with the arrival of Louis and other English-speaking friends, the Anglo-Saxon element changed the conditions under which I first knew Barbizon, I am tempted to linger over my earlier souvenirs of the village. These are indissolubly associated with Wyatt Eaton, with whom during the summers of 1873–1874 I lodged apart from the hotel, first in the rooms over the mère Charlotte, and the following year in a house on the plain outside the village, whose owner rejoiced in the name of Father Chicory. Of Eaton I had had a passing glimpse in the spring of 1872 in New York. We both made our *débuts* as exhibitors in the old building of the National Academy of Design, in the exhibition of that year. Our maiden works were placed near to each other upon the topmost line of overcrowded pictures and, with the zeal of the very young, we were availing ourselves of the privileges of "varnishing day," endeavouring, no doubt, to make our pictures look as well as they could. Eaton I can still see through the lapse of time, earnest with the earnestness with which through life he performed the most trifling act, his fine cut and sensitive face, softened by the incipient growth of an adolescent beard, his frank, blue

eyes beaming, as they always did, with kindness—the very picture of a young artist. Thus the young Van Dyke must have looked in his youth. His face was surmounted by a Scotch cap with ribbons hanging pendant on his neck—a coiffure at which the Academy student of to-day would scoff, and which even then appeared a trifle unusual; but Eaton throughout life never scrupled to look the artist, even when the majority of his co-disciples were at pains to conceal their professional identity under the habiliments of the broker. We did not speak, and I only learned his name after he had descended from the step-ladder and had gone away, by reading the signature on his picture. The following year I met him in Paris, where for a time we worked side by side in the *atelier Gérôme*, and from that our intimacy increased until we lodged under the same roof in the country. I have told of our joint effort to make the acquaintance of Millet, and when this was successful, Eaton became, far more than I, intimate with the master. This was but natural, for Eaton, as much as any man I have ever known, had the faculty of exciting interest and making friends. Absolutely earnest and simple in his affection for those for whom he cared, his engaging personality provoked a return of the sentiment. The perplexities of a dual view of any question never troubled him and, having, for the time being, given his allegiance to Millet's work, to the exclusion of any other expression in art, he assumed in all simplicity the position of a son of the house, and in like fashion was accepted there. My unquestioning admiration for the man and his work appeared to Eaton lukewarm in comparison

with his own and, in the disputatious arguments that sweeten the lives of sworn friends when they are artists and young, he scored me as severely as though I were one of little faith.

One of the results of this intimacy with Millet was a paper published a few years before Eaton's death, in the "Century Magazine," in which he recalled his souvenirs of Millet, and which appears to me a most truthful picture of the man as we knew him. Eaton had certain traits in common with Millet in his work, though he lacked not only the large robustness of representation, but the synthetic, imaginative quality of the Barbizon painter. The immediate effect of Millet's influence was not, indeed, happy for my friend, who for some years fell into a quasi-imitation of the master's work and neglected his own more personal quality, which was closely allied to portraiture. In fact, Eaton has left us many admirable portraits, where the character of the sitter has been retained, though in every case a strong infusion of the personal view of the painter can be felt. In works such as these, and in the subject-pictures inspired by some individual characteristic of the model, Eaton was a painter whose too early death has left a lamentable void in the ranks of our art.

It has always appeared to me that the more one's admiration goes out to a certain master, the more dangerous it is to follow in his footsteps, and this is the more true in direct degree as his influence may be apart from the contemporary movement of art. It is certain that Millet, Corot, and Puvis de Chavannes, to name three of the most individual painters of our time, have had no direct influence on any individual pupil that is

apparent in the continuity of modern painting. Lesser men of their time can count their pupils by scores, and point not only to a continuance of their influence, but in some cases these pupils have carried out their precepts to a progression and completeness that has made the pupils masters in their turn. It is significant, for instance, that Sargent should be the pupil of Duran, and even more so that the brilliant technical experiments and the acknowledged mastery of Besnard should be engrafted on the parent trunk of Bouguerreau. It is equally evident that the influence of the three greater men named above, and the masters of their kind, is not lost, but it works in the progression of our art in a guise so much more subtle and evasive that it forbids direct and apparent continuity.

Arguments like these were constant in the days when I found my patience taxed to see my comrade Eaton painstakingly make a drawing of a pair of sabots which he wished to introduce into the foreground of a picture that he was engaged on. As the sabots were there on the studio floor, it appeared to me so much simpler to paint them in directly on the canvas, but no; Millet painted from drawings and, more royalist than the king, my friend insisted on the process of first making a drawing, and then copying from it to introduce an accessory object in the picture. Eaton, in his simple way, was liberally endowed with obstinacy and, gently shaking his head, proceeded with his work, treating me as one of the profane to whom the inner sanctuary was impenetrable.

He had, however, a hearty respect for Gérôme, agreeing with me that, as a master, as his record had

already shown, he was capable of forming pupils whose qualities differed greatly from his own. Hence my revenge was sweet when a few weeks later we had returned to Paris and were at work in the *atelier*.

The model for the week was an Italian with a bushy head of jet-black, lustreless hair, olive skin, and marked features. Eaton had made his drawing on the canvas, had "fixed" the charcoal by spraying it with the mixture of shellac and alcohol used for that purpose, and then had given way, in an exaggeration of Millet's methods, to his fancy by washing in the color transparently in the richest hues. The man's hair became deep purple, his tawny skin glowed with warm tones, when Gérôme quietly stepped behind Eaton. "Do you see the colour of the model like that?" queried the master. "N-no, not exactly," replied Eaton, alarmed, for there was a shade of the severity for which the master was noted in the simple question. "I am simply preparing it in this way to paint over it solidly." "Prepare nothing, *paint*," emphasized Gérôme as he passed on. "Low," said Eaton to me later in the day, "perhaps you were right about those sabots." But all these dissonances of opinion between us never brought a cloud over the serenity of our friendship, and in fact cemented it the stronger. Eaton was in his time a more convinced Barbizonian than any of us, making long stations there in midwinter, and painting several pictures, two or three of which went to Canada, where he was born, though his family were originally from one of our Eastern States.

To me Eaton was a large part of Barbizon, for we were both united by a common admiration for Millet.

It is strange how few of our comrades of the time gave him the rank now accorded him; but his example was so influential and our youthful enthusiasm so great that we even formed the project that, when our schooldays were over, after a short visit home, we would settle in the village for the rest of our lives. Destiny comes in rudely to shatter all such plans, but there will always remain a glamour like that of a first love over the scene of such dreams. Day and night that first summer found us afoot in the forest, and even more on the plain. Once I remember we were caught there about nightfall in the autumn, in a fog so dense that it was only by walking for over three hours in different directions that by chance we found a recognizable landmark, and by following the barrier of the forest finally arrived at the village. It was a good time, and though neither Eaton nor myself were fated to live in Barbizon and uphold the traditions to which we were then wedded, it might not have been so hard a lot had we held steadfast to our purpose. For of those of our compatriot painters who have chosen to live abroad, the happiest are those who eschew the great cities, and in some quiet hamlet, or by successive stages in modest inns like that of Siron at Barbizon, pass their year in the country. Life is cheaper, work in the constant presence of nature is more continuous and sincere, they are nearer the people of the country than in the cosmopolitan cities, and the normal sanity of an artist's life may be pursued with only the cares—which are sufficiently great—incident to his work. An artist of this type, unless he has an assured income, will still have the preoccupation of producing each year one or more

exhibition pictures of sufficient importance to sustain his reputation, and incidentally remind the public and the picture dealers of his continued existence. At times also he must abandon the country, and with his wares pursue this last elusive gentleman in order that he may live, for continuous existence at the expense of long-suffering innkeepers is not possible—was not even in the time of which I write; and I believe that the race of *aubergistes* has become more sophisticated in these degenerate days. Still, under these conditions a man may pursue his life-work and arrive somewhat nearer the millennium pictured by Kipling, of painting things as he sees them for the god of the things as they are, than is possible otherwise and otherwhere in the prosecution of our ancient craft.

Our artists abroad in the cities of the Old World appear to my view less fortunate. To speak of Paris, which I know best, though we have a sprinkling of our men in other capitals of Europe, the artist of a foreign nationality is treated with entire cordiality and great politeness, but always as a stranger. The exhibitions are open, and honours, when the native exhibitors are fully satisfied, are freely accorded him. A man of broad sympathies, as the history of art in the past has proven the typical artist to be, can hardly pass his life in any environment on the footing of an honoured guest. Sooner or later he must pass from the seclusion of his studio into the broader world and, if only in the general interests of his own art, desire to be part of and have a voice in its evolution. Here he will find his way barred. The struggle for life is far more intense throughout the Old World than in our newer civilization—the ramifica-

tions of this primal necessity penetrate every function of life—and the whole social organization of Europe is permeated with a selfish, but absolutely necessary, intention to retain all the real prizes of any career for the benefit of natives. What may be termed the politics of art in Europe are, by the hands of an oligarchy, organized more cunningly, and held within circumscribed limits more firmly, than any system of government known to me. Now, while it may be conceded that the one and highest purpose of an artist's life should be to produce good work and to keep as free as possible from all extraneous complications, this ideal condition is as impossible in the craft of the painter as it is in any other vocation of man. As the greatest artists of the past, as Raphael, Rubens, and Velasquez, were men of the world about them, so is it the birthright of the modern artist to take his place in his environment and his share in the shaping of events.

The American artist abroad, however, would be ill-advised if he openly demanded this right in the republic of arts, and consequently such little influence as he is permitted to exercise is by favour only, and too often by favour purchased at too dear a cost. Therefore the privilege to live in an atmosphere where art, where the continuous effort at perfection of technical expression, is recognized and honoured, is the chief recompense which falls to the lot of the American artist in Europe; and is one which, from the point of view of one who loves his craft, is by no means to be disdained. The men of my generation, who from circumstance or choice have been called upon to work at home, have had by way of compensation an abiding sense that

they were aiding to implant a standard of art hitherto unknown upon these shores. This our exiled brethren abroad have missed, and to this foundation of a future American school of art the humblest worker in our ranks here at home has been privileged to do his part. The edifice is far from complete, and the task of the men who have worked so far, must go on until others take our place and our work, even as we have but continued what the "Hudson River School" had begun; but I fancy that whatever our individual production may have lost, by enforced attention to the administrative and executive interests of art in our country is more than gained by the progress which we have been able to witness and to aid.

This digression is a far call to the dreams of two youths at Barbizon so long ago, but as the memory of Eaton and his yeoman's work in the foundation of the Society of American Artists arises, its relevance may be conceded.

In my excursions over this pleasant country I had one trifling adventure, which has been fixed in my memory as the only instance in well-policed France where I have felt myself in danger. Late in the autumn, returning from a journey to Paris, I had reached Melun too late for Lejosne's yellow 'bus on its trip to Barbizon. The distance is about seven miles, and I set out to foot it gayly through the gathering dusk. The road was smooth, and I had progressed about two miles outside the town of Melun, when I entered a little wood. Walking care free but abstracted in my thoughts, I was suddenly conscious, as I emerged again into the twilight, of a figure outlined against the sky, for the road here

Door of Theodore Rousseau's House, Barbizon, 1875

From a painting by W. H. Low

mounted sharply, which appeared to me about the size of the statue of Liberty that graces our harbour in New York. The arms were uplifted, brandishing a long bludgeon, and the voice of the creature demanded sternly: "Qui va là?" In my surprise and fright my mind calculated the chances of escape by retreat, but the thought of pursuit inspired me to rush forward, in order that at close quarters the long club might be less effective. At the same time, not to be less military than my interlocutor, I cried, "Un ami."

On close approach I found a man, taller than myself but less gigantic than he at first appeared, dressed in the garb of a peasant. At first it was difficult to decide if I was in the presence of a madman or a drunkard, but, somewhat to my relief, he proved the latter. My foreign accent was near to be my undoing, for the Franco-Prussian war had swept over this country but three years before, and it was some time before my fervently expressed desire that the Republic might prosper, and my affirmation that I was not a Prussian, calmed his suspicion.

At last he lowered his stick, which was quite six feet in length, and said grumblingly: "Lucky for you, you're not a Prussian, for I've sworn to kill every Prussian I see. Where are you going—Barbizon—well, we will walk together, for I go to Chailly." And so side by side we set out, my new comrade lurching occasionally, but on the whole quite able to walk. He had been at a wedding in a neighbouring village, and "See," said he, "I've brought away some of the provender." From somewhere in the recesses of his blouse he brought out a sticky mass of *pâté*, which he

urged me to taste. Angered at my refusal, he once more returned to his suspicion that I was of the hated race from across the line. Then he suddenly broke out: "I can see them yet, the Uhlans that came to Chailly. One of them took my baby from the cradle, put him on the table, and laid down in his place. I can see his boots dangling over the end of the cradle yet. Ah, mon Dieu! when shall I kill them all." Thus he maundered on while I, as we went by a heap of stones placed by the wayside, as occurs from place to place to repair the road, pretended to stumble and picked up as large a stone as I could rapidly select. This I carried hid in the folds of a light overcoat that I wore, determined to defend myself if his humour became too bellicose. Fortunately it changed, and he obligingly offered to teach me the "Marseillaise," in which noble chant our two voices were upraised for some considerable distance on the quiet road which now ran in the open between broad fields.

About midway between Melun and Chailly, which is the village on the plain preceding Barbizon, there was built, I know not how long ago, but some time about the middle of the nineteenth century, a low, circular structure standing detached inside an enclosed space. This is the tomb of an eccentric nobleman, who was refused sepulchre in consecrated ground, as in his will he decreed that he should be buried surrounded by all the horses and hounds who were his companions of the chase. The slaughter of these faithful beasts was accomplished, the behest of their master carried out, and the tomb stands stark upon a little hillock, with the lodge of a keeper at the gate of the enclosure.

Approaching this on our way my drunken companion asked me if I had visited the tomb, and, on my evasive answer, protested that as a stranger I should not neglect one of the principal objects of interest in the country, especially as I was so fortunate as to be in the company of an intimate friend of the keeper. Thereupon he rang the bell at the gate long and loudly without eliciting any response, to my great relief. There was light, however, in the window of the lodge which looked upon the road, and to this he addressed himself, bawling at the top of his voice and throwing small pebbles at the glass to attract attention. At last the window was thrown back and a woman appeared in the opening, to whom my heart at once went out in sympathy, so eloquently, and with such command of vituperation, did she express an opinion of the company I was keeping, an opinion in which I shared. She appeared to know my companion well and his character even better, but she was, fortunately, obdurate to his expostulations, and, as she finally closed the window, nothing was left to us but to resume our march.

Various cynical remarks about the lodge-keeper's wife and her sex in general, from which he appeared to have greatly suffered, brought us to within a short distance of Chailly, when suddenly my companion said, "We are tired, let us lie down and sleep." I protested in vain that my friends in Barbizon awaited me, that I would lose my dinner by delay; it was ill arguing with a man who was ugly drunk. He pointed out a place by the wayside with the end of his great stick, and fairly commanded me to lie down.

This I finally did, and he stretched himself on the

sward a few steps distant. It was bright moonlight and, with the artist's eye that instinctively works even when the mind is otherwise occupied, I can remember the silhouette of some strawricks in the field before me as I fretted at the mingled danger and absurdity of my position.

Suddenly a welcome sound arose above the stillness of the fields. My companion was asleep and snoring heavily. With much caution I rose to my feet, and as silently as possible stole away, until a sufficient distance was attained, when I increased my pace, and soon in Siron's dining-room, over a late dinner, comforted by the lights and the presence of friends, I was recounting my adventure.

In the forest depths—Fontainebleau

Sketch in oils by Will H. Low

X

THE ADVENT OF THE ANGLO-SAXON

THE change in the character of life that Eaton and I led in Barbizon was sufficiently marked when, in 1875, the first considerable contingent of English-speaking students came to the village. Up to that time we were always together and very much apart from the life of the inn. We were on the best of terms with those with whom we shared the really excellent fare and the amusing polyglot conversation of the *table d'hôte*, but we were more interested in the friends we had made in the village, and in making a preliminary trial of the life which, with all the fervour of good intentions, we had projected for our future. We were also perhaps a little proud of our admission into the inner circle of the permanent residents of the village, and consequently, with the enthusiasm of new converts, looked askance at the "hotel crowd," as we had dubbed the temporary guests of the inn.

Our work was, of course, our chief concern, and I doubt if in any part of the world so spacious and gracious a working-place has been provided for the artist as in and around the borders of the forest of Fontainebleau. This sentiment of nature's profusion, of what I may call her availability for the painter's purpose, is not perhaps strongly felt at first view; for, though there are many portions of the forest quite obviously picturesque, presenting compositions ready

made to the painter's hand, the outlying country on every side consists of great plains, every inch of their surface carefully tilled, save for the roads which traverse them, that are quite without striking features. But the world has long ago accepted the subtle Italian dictum, that the sympathetic human countenance has more lasting charm than one that is strikingly beautiful, and the country round about, and the forest itself, are *simpatica* to the last degree.

Man has been constantly at work there, and there are vestiges of his presence since the tenth century; but he has scrupulously respected nature; and the succeeding generations of painters who have worked there have lived in an enchanted land.

Of all the vocations of man, surely few afford greater joy to the practitioner than the work of the painter out-of-doors. He stands hand in hand with nature, she—a jealous mistress—now beams smilingly on her suitor, or anon she frowns; but never for a moment permits him to forget her. He, with all the ardour of the male, and with something of his mastery, bends zealously to her pursuit, and through her changing moods retains the memory of the special charm which first attracted him; and which, he comforts himself, assures his ultimate victory. Buoyed by this hope, breathed upon by soft airs or conscious of his force as he resists the buffets of the storm, there are few healthier, saner hours vouchsafed to the life of man than those when in the open he essays to portray the face of nature. It matters little that his success may not be palpable, that to others the work achieved may suggest but scantily all that he saw, or that to himself, in comparison with the

vivid impression of nature still before his eyes, the failure of his endeavour may seem complete—let him take the advice, which he will find to be that of all painters who have thus worked out of doors, and *never destroy a study from nature*. In after years, with the memory of the scene that he endeavoured to depict dimmed by the mists of time, he shall perchance look upon his despised study and, through its darkened tones, the sunlight of the morning in the Bas Bréau or upon the plain, or the sharp storm when, crouching in the shelter of a wheatrick, he dashed a few rapid colour notes on his canvas, will live again for him, and, happily, through revived memory, aided by enlarged experience, may be the foundation of a definite achievement.

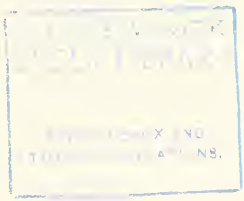
Little of this was formulated in our minds in those Arcadian days of our youth, but the daily incidents of our pleasant industry sufficed to keep our thoughts and our hands busy. In the early morning, through the village street, with the incense of the wood fires rising straight in the clear, and the no less aromatic though more prosaic perfume of the soup of Jacques Bonhomme permeating the air, we were astir. Sometimes we would issue from the village to the plain, the matin sun sharply defining the crest of the furrows, or, at another season, gilding the refined gold of the swaying wheat. Ah! that plain, what lessons of form it has taught its earnest students among the painters who have worked over its surface like so many patient husbandmen. For Millet who, as I have described, did not scruple to draw upon his store of knowledge to construct a human figure, has testified—by many careful drawings that are almost

like the measured work of a topographical engineer—that memory is powerless to depict the subtle accidents of form, the delicate gradations of its surface. Like a loved countenance on which life has written its history, so might the story of many generations be read in the various shaped and vari-coloured fields, and the interlacing paths that ran hither and yon, defining plots of ground for which the energies of a family had toiled early and late. To the casual passer-by the plain may be featureless and devoid of interest, but it has sufficed for noble masterpieces of Millet and Rousseau, and none have ever studied it sincerely without finding it, under the overarching sky, a fitting scene for the twelve acts of the drama of the sylvan year.

Other days took the painter to the forest, entering by the Alley of the Cows—*l'Allée des Vaches*—in which ends the village street. His footsteps rang on the hard surface of the road, for there is no spot within the sixty miles of the forest's circumference where macadamized roads do not penetrate; though one may plunge from the highway into the woods, and in a few minutes be hidden from all evidence of the sight of man. Here in the depths, at spacious intervals, one may find all varieties of forest scenery. Continuous care since the time of the sainted King Louis, by plantation and wise forestry, has kept this great tract to the semblance of a purely natural forest. There is naught of the wooded park, save in its very centre, where, adjoining the château in the bright little town lying in the middle of the forest, there is a stately park, smaller, but to my mind more beautiful, than that of Versailles; a fit setting for the noble château which, since François

L'allée des Vaches—Entrance to Barbizon, from the Forest

From a painting by H. R. Bloomer



premier, each succeeding king of France has delighted in embellishing.

The stillness of the morning, the spicy odours of the trees, welcomed the matinal painter, and a brisk walk never so long as to induce fatigue, for there were abundant *motifs* near at hand, brought him to his work. The folding easel was soon in place, the canvas placed upon it, the clear and pure colours, squeezed from their tubes, duly arranged upon the palette, and work began. Often, if the painting ground was some distance from the inn, a lunch would be carried, and a second canvas for an afternoon effect would be ready, when, after the lunch disposed of and sundry cigarettes burned on the altar of the arts, the industrious painter resumed his task. Canvases of large dimensions, too large to be carried to and fro, would be firmly fixed to upright stakes driven in the ground and, with the absorbent back of the canvas protected from the weather by oil cloth, would be left out of doors for weeks until the painting was completed.

No other protection was necessary; the painted surface of the canvas was practically impervious to rain, and the chance faggot gatherers, the forest guards, or even errant children passing that way had, one and all, too hearty respect for the arts to inflict the slightest damage on a painting in progress, thus left at their mercy. Many a picture in the museums to-day, protected by frame and glass, and the temperature of the gallery where it hangs carefully regulated, was thus born gipsy-like in the woods, where the shafts of sunlight by day and the stars by night watched curiously the progress of its growth.

These large works were the exception, however, and were less of the order of studies than pictures thus produced for the Salon, and for the most part we carried our virgin canvas to the wood, and at night brought it home to the impromptu critical gathering in the courtyard at Siron's; often to regret that the covering of its surface had effectually deprived the world of the potential masterpiece, with which every blank canvas may, perchance, be pregnant.

The quitting hour was a fitting crown to a day well spent. When the shadows grew long, when the sunlight in the distance, which had effectually baffled your brush for a tantalizing period, had finally faded, the time to buckle up your traps, strap your knapsack to your back, and turn your face homeward had come. In the midsummer the golden light in the tree-tops sent you on your way through the cool shadow below as though your head were a halo, and it was yet day when, emerging from the forest, the pointed iron of the alpenstock to which the artist affixes his sketching-umbrella rang on the stone pavement of Siron's courtyard, and vermouth and friendly criticism awaited you. Later in the autumn, the evening settled chill, you stretched yourself a little stiffly as you ceased your work, glad at the prospect of the brisk walk. By the time your various paraphernalia of the artist were strapped together it was dusk, and, holding your newly painted canvas gingerly from your person, your footsteps echoed loudly as you gained the highway through the woods. You walked in a Gothic cathedral, the columnar trunks and the interfoliation of the branches standing dark against the crimson and golden stain of the windows of

the sky. It was glorious, though sometimes a trifle weird, as far off in the distance you might hear the roaring of a wild boar or the booming of the deer; and a sense of solitude rose from the rhythmic beat of your feet. The lights would be lit in the inn on your arrival, the painters, growing fewer in number as the season advanced, would be gathered in the high room, panelled with sketches, where we dined; where the table, already set, awaited, and a fire crackeled on the hearth in the corner. Here, by the light of a candle held close to your sketch, your work received the approbation or frank disapproval of your friends, each on his arrival running the gauntlet of criticism, and there ensued a discussion on art in general, accompanied by becoming personalities, until it was interrupted by the entrance of Siron, bearing high a huge and smoking soup-tureen, and crying, "*à table, Messieurs, à table.*" We dearly loved the general discussion of art in those days, when we frankly talked "shop" on all occasions—and some of us have not outgrown the habit. On rainy days, or as the mood seized us, we worked in our studios or in the houses of the peasants. In these last, one was very close to the people, in more senses than one, but I have always been grateful for the experience. It gave me an insight which comparatively few of our compatriots have had, of the underlying force of the French nation; of the typical self-respect, accepting, not the superiority of one social station above another, but the simple difference between his own position and that of others; with the belief that each offers certain and perhaps equal advantages, which is a strong characteristic of the peasant.

The servility so often encountered in England, or the insistent assertion of equality met with here, is unknown to Jacques Bonhomme. You come from a far country, you wear finer linen and better clothes than he, but that is a habit, as you, being a foreigner, might wear a ring in your nose; and you earn your living by the practice of a trade which he respects, but does not envy you. Quite as evidently, to his mind, his acre of land has for him more value than anything you may possess; and one may meet, in what I fear should be called the hovel of a French peasant, more truly the spirit of equality, and certainly more contentment with his lot, than we can find among the tillers of the soil in our own prosperous republic. In many ways the peasant lacks the superficial refinement, and in almost every case the quasi-education, with which our common schools have veneered our masses; but, in his speech at least, *la politesse Française* is with him no vain word, as M. Anatole France pointed out many years ago in his convincing argument against the language which Zola permitted his peasants to use in "La Terre." In this land of plenty we have as yet no conditions that parallel those that confront the rural populations of France; but in this environment the peasant has wrested comparative comfort, self-support, and cheerful contentment, under conditions which we, in turn, must respect, though we may not envy them.

Viewed in the light of what Eaton was able to do in the furtherance of our art at home, a service by no means to be measured by the comparatively few portraits and pictures which he painted; for the uncounted work he did as a teacher, and in the betterment of art

conditions by his share in the foundation and support of the Society of American Artists must be taken into consideration, fate ordained wisely in shattering his early dream of carrying out his art life in Barbizon. Our project was, however, seriously considered, and as we had both had at a very early age to confront the problem of self-support by our immature art, it was with some knowledge of the probable conditions of the life we planned that our resolution was entertained. My early desertion of the *atelier Gérôme* and my rare appearance at the restaurant Picot, on the corner of the Rue de Seine and the Rue Jacob, which was the general meeting-place of the comparatively few American students then in Paris, made my meetings with Eaton in the city less frequent, and the intimacy established with Bob Stevenson in the autumn of '74, together with the influx of Scotch and English friends at Barbizon the following year, established conditions where I saw less of the residents of the village, with whom Eaton continued his relations, especially with Millet, in the months before his last illness.

The Anglo-Saxons, with the dominant characteristics of our race, at once stood apart from the life long established in the village and at the inn. They were not very numerous, though their presence attracted for short periods numbers of English-speaking additions to the polyglot *table d'hôte*—men whose stay was so short, and whose admission to our inner circle was so completely brief, when not denied, that even the memory of their names has gone from me. But for what we lacked in numbers, the determination to profit by our pleasant surroundings and to establish a republic

of youth answerable only to the laws of our own enactment, more than made up. The Frenchmen, naturally, and the various Belgians, Swedes, and Hungarians, by common consent, had the customs and followed the traditional life that I fancy had been led since Barbizon became an artistic resort. The Anglo-Saxons, among whom I soon took my place, were grouped about one end of the long table, communicated with each other in their own language instead of that of the country in general use among the poly-national majority present, and conducted themselves with a freedom unattainable to them in their native land. Not in any willingly offensive sense, of course, for we were on the best of terms with all present, and the youth and high spirits of a number of our party made the more serious end of the table slightly envious of the joy which reigned among us—necessitating frequent translations of the stories told and the witticisms bandied about in our circle, which, I am bound to say, often excited less hilarity when translated than their fond authors expected. Perhaps the most striking feature inaugurated was the practice of physical effort for its own sake—for exercise. The Frenchman of that time got along very well without other exercise than that which was incident to his activity in carrying out whatever work he might be engaged in. Our friends at Siron's of other nationalities therefore looked on gravely when the little band of *Anglais*, for we were all comprised in that generic term, scaled garden walls in order to limber their muscles, or some of them, bearded men, gave themselves up to the childish game of leap-frog in the court. I must make the autobiographical confes-

sion here that I secretly sympathized with the Gallic distaste for what they denominated "*les sports*," and took comparatively little part in the various foot races, wrestling bouts, and other forms of Anglo-Saxon health-seeking pleasures to which they were addicted. Still, I remember that I was the only one to take up the challenge when on one occasion, late after dinner, Bob Stevenson volunteered the opinion that we were one and all "stale" from a period of too great attention to our work, and proposed a walk through the forest to the town of Fontainebleau and back, a distance of about sixteen miles. We set out about ten o'clock. It was, in the beautiful phrase which Louis long afterward set in his constellation of style, "a wonderful clear night of stars," and as we entered the broad avenue of the forest the road was dimly visible, flanked on either side by great trees. We did not hasten our pace, already forgetting in the beauty of the night the hygienic purpose of our undertaking. We indulged in improving conversation, a benefit never absent when Bob was present, and were glad that we were alive—and young. In some of the reaches of the forest the trees joined thickly overhead, and there we walked in total darkness in a velvet-like environment of solid black, our glowing cigarettes gleaming like fireflies in the gloom. By daylight we both knew our way, having in fact at our command more than one route to choose from; but, forgetting in our talk to note our landmarks, we found ourselves at one time quite off the beaten track, until, by lighting matches when we came to a sign-post in the woods, we read our direction and regained the *grand route*. It was long past midnight when we

reached the town of Fontainebleau, and all that virtuous city had been long wrapped in slumber. Somehow our enthusiasm had lagged, and by mutual consent we, with great difficulty, awoke a hostlery which we knew, and, when a servant with a lantern finally appeared, the "two crazy Englishmen," as I have no doubt he thought, were shown to bed. We ordered our coffee at daybreak and left the place, having seen no other human being about the inn than the man who had admitted us a few hours before. The return home, with the dew glinting from the leaves in the sunlight and the refreshing odour of the reawakened forest, amply repaid us for our scanty share of sleep; and, with a virtuous sense of exhilaration, we burst in on our comrades at Siron's, about the time that they were taking their morning coffee.

The love of exercise—the, to me, quite reprehensible denial that the quiet prosecution of an artist's work should not suffice for the gratification of his every sense—was at the root of the undoing of Barbizon, and its dethronement—with this coterie of friends—as the one and only place where life, as we conceived it, was possible.

It came about in this way. The weather had been bad, every one had been forced to give up work out of doors, and as few were situated as I, who had retained my little studio down the street where I was somewhat independent of the weather, the men had hung around the hotel, where preponderant tobacco and overindulgence in "estrats" to kill time had bred dissatisfaction. We sat long after *déjeuner*, and Bob Stevenson had given a spirited account of a canoe race in which

he had participated in his university days, a race where in part the contestants had left the water and carried their heavy "Rob Roy" canoes across country from one stream to another. At its conclusion our nautical friend, Henry Enfield, gave voice. "That is life; why does a man come to Barbizon where there is nothing to do, only to mess with a lot of sticky colour? No self-respecting country-side is without water, and here you can hardly get a tub." This sentiment was re-echoed by a murmur of approbation and, other voices joining in, poor Barbizon, which *au fond* we all loved, was left without a leg to stand on. Then I spoke: "You know there's a place on the other side of the forest. I've never been there, but some of my French friends have told me of it, where there's a river. I don't know how much of a river, but I believe that the garden of the inn runs down to it, and the inn is said to be fairly decent." With one accord they turned on me with reproach. "You have known this all the time, while we have been reduced to a wash bowl the size of a tea-cup. Let us at once go and bathe in that river!" It was no sooner said than done; one of us negotiated with Lejosne, and half an hour after his largest vehicle drew up at Siron's; whereupon, with baggage of the lightest order, we crowded in and were off through the forest. The party consisted of the two Stevensons, Henry Enfield, Frank O'Meara, Walter Simpson and myself. Walter Simpson, the "Cigarette" of the "Inland Voyage," had by this time joined us—Sir Walter Grindlay Simpson, Bart., to give him his full name and title; "so respectable and so useful," as his most intimate friend once remarked,

"in a society where names are hardly required, and titles and respectability are equally at a discount"; a sentiment in which the bearer of the name and title cheerfully joined. The weather was stormy, with intermittent rain and sunshine, and the forest across whose whole width we rode, was superb under these conditions. The vehicle was ill protected during the showers, but this we accepted as a promise of the thorough wetting we anticipated in the river, and laughter rang high and song even was essayed as we rolled under the branching canopy of the wood. At last we struck the poplar-lined avenue from Bourron above Marlotte, and finally drew up at Chevillon's Inn. By this time the rain came down in earnest, and for the three days of our stay the downpour scarcely ceased; a welcome which even my amphibious friends thought somewhat overdone.

He who goes to Grez to-day will find the river, the pleasant garden of the inn, the much-depicted bridge (I believe myself the only painter of my generation, who has sojourned there, who has not painted it), and, farther down the street the massive ruin of the palace of La Reine Blanche, for this little hamlet was once a populous town, nearby the village church, large and of handsome proportions, whose door, architects tell us, marks the first influence of the return of the Crusaders to France by its Saracenic ornament. He will find the inn modernized and changed; the original building, which must have been in portion existant in the latter days of Grez's importance as a town, having fallen into ruin a few years after our visit, as transposed and related in the "Treasure of Franchard." He will,

The bridge at Grez

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I trust, still find Madame Chevillon, as I did some five years ago, when the good old woman took me to her capacious bosom and kissed me on both cheeks, crying with joy as at the return of a prodigal, and with sorrow that I came alone of the gay company, who for three or four years had been the light of her house.

It is not to be denied that on the occasion of our first visit the outlook was dismal. Not to be daunted, however, in the purpose of the pilgrimage, a dip in the river was indulged in before the dinner, which, considering that there were no other guests in the inn, and that our hostess had been taken unawares, was surprisingly good. We elected to dine in the kitchen; the large dining-room, which afterward, when filled with numerous guests the following years, was sufficiently gay, appearing that evening appallingly sad. So we gathered around the rude table built into the large kitchen, a roughly hewed column supporting the ceiling, piercing it in the middle; while in the huge hooded fireplace, where portions of our dinner were still cooking, a crackling fire punctuated our conversation, and cast a ruddy glow over the room as the rain beat against the heavily framed window panes without. It was much such a room as the traveller in the immortal works of Dumas Père would find; and when, years later, I read in "*La Rotisserie de la Reine Peadauque*," by Anatole France, the description of its hero's boyhood home, that night at Grez came back to me. We went to our beds finally, hoping for better weather on the morrow; a hope in which we were deceived, for Jupiter Pluvius reigned to the end of our stay. Continual drenching dampened the ardour of

our exploration of the river by noon, as there is no place quite so wet as a boat under the rain, and for the rest of the time we remained not far from the fire in the kitchen. Here, for the only time in all my association with my friends, cards were procured and we sat down to a game, which some one of the party knew, called *Chien vert*. Knowledge of how this game of green dog is played has quite vanished from my memory; but it must be of a tedious and intricate nature, as, to the accompaniment of the falling rain, we played some forty-eight hours, when not engaged in sleeping or eating, and to give zest to the performance we played for money; yet, with all this misplaced industry, the sum of six francs represented the greatest loss sustained. We were in fact very much bored with our first visit to Grez, although the inn was quaint, the fare good, and our hostess kind. Louis Stevenson's impressions were summed up in a letter to his mother:

"Chez Siron, Barbizon, Seine et Marne,
August, 1875.

"My dear Mother—

"I have been three days at a place called Grez, a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain. A low bridge of many arches choked with sedge; great fields of white and yellow water-lilies; poplars and willows innumerable; and about it all such an atmosphere of sadness and slackness, one could do nothing but get into the boat and out of it again and yawn for bedtime.

"Yesterday Bob and I walked home; it came on a very creditable thunderstorm; we were soon wet

through; sometimes the rain was so heavy that one could only see by holding the hand over the eyes; and, to crown all, we lost our way and wandered all over the place, and into the artillery range among broken trees, with big shot lying about among the rocks. It was near dinner time when we got to Barbizon, and it is supposed that we walked from twenty-three to twenty-five miles, which is not bad for the Advocate, who is not tired this morning. I was very glad to be back again in this dear place, and smell the wet forest in the morning. Simpson and the rest drove back in a carriage and got about as wet as we did."

I well remember the drive back which, oblivious to discomfort, we made melodious (?) with song.

XI

STENNIS AÎNÉ, STENNIS FRÈRE, AND WALTER SIMPSON

OF the two cousins, whose names and relationship were thus misstated in the accounts which Siron kept, Bob was at this time easily the dominant spirit. Louis held his own, indeed we all did, in the constant flow of talk; but in our dissonant orchestra the bâton of the leader was in the hands of the elder of the cousins. In all his sympathies he was, to use Gautier's phrase, a man for whom the visible world existed; and the world of fancy, illumined by the light that never was on sea or land, was then, and remained with him for ever, the debatable ground. Hence his after-allotment to Velasquez of the supreme place in art, and the lesser sympathy easily discernable in his writing for the effort of the Italian masters. His taste in literature was of the same order, and in the many discussions where Louis upheld the claims of the poets and the more abstract writers, and where I sided with Louis, Bob would in the end dismiss the whole contention as one beyond his ken, granting them their place, but insisting that Flaubort or Balzac was much more his "game."

One instance of a small victory over Bob worth recording, as in matters æsthetic few who ever frequented him have victories in argument to their credit, belongs to the autumn preceding Louis's first visit to Barbizon,

where my intimacy with his cousin first began, and when Millet was still alive, to be, unknowingly, the convincing factor in a hot discussion between two English-speaking art students.

The time was out of joint for my friend. The great men were not only dead, but their influence was lost; the age had turned to science, and though, he admitted, art was, in the country where we sojourned, held in high esteem and ranked with the most important avocations of man, it was merely a perfunctory survival of habit. I protested, and cited Baudry, of whose devotion to his great work in the decoration of the New Opera I had heard, though its result was only to become known to us later. But Bob argued, with some truth, that one who, like Baudry, affronted his task in so submissive a spirit as to spend four years of preparation in copying Michael Angelo and Raphael, proved the paucity of original initiative in our day, demanding if I believed that Veronese would have devoted an equal amount of primary energy to the preparation for any work conceivable. Rather worsted in my contention, I quietly arranged, through the painter's son, a visit to Millet's studio, where Bob had never been, but of which there had already been question between us.

When a time was appointed I reverted to our talk, cheerfully assuring my pessimistic friend that I had a knife concealed in my sleeve for him. The interview with Millet, if conducted on terms slightly more familiar than the first, which I have described, was sufficiently impressive. In a nature as keenly appreciative as that of my friend, the gradual realization that we

were in the presence of one who, here in our own time, was close kin to the mighty dead—that this figure with the heavy shoulders and slow tread, in the studio simple almost to barrenness, showing his works without assumption of primacy, yet evincing authority in his craft by every simple gesture, in every word he spoke, and making good his preëminence by every work shown—was well worth observing. Fluent, and even flippant as Bob could be, here he was neither one nor the other, but, visibly moved, the few words which he spoke to the master were tinged with emotion. We left the studio, and with one accord turning down the village street, we were well out upon the plain before either of us spoke. Then Bob, with a droll surrender in his look and tone, turned to me, and said: "Do you consider it fair play, in a conversation between gentlemen concerning minor poets, to spring Shakespeare on your opponent?"

Louis, as I have said, if not more reticent—I fear we none of us practised that virtue to any considerable degree—took a less conspicuous part when our talk turned on painting, as it naturally did much of the time. He was also much with Walter Simpson and, as I had for a time work to do in the forest, the two friends would often accompany me. Here, while I worked, they would lie prone on the ground basking in the sunshine, or, from my station, would take short walks, returning late in the day, when we would walk homeward together. It was then that I learned from Simpson some of his experiences. The son of the well-known physician, who was the first in Europe to employ anæsthetics, he had, with the strain of seriousness

which is a common trait of Scottish youth, some years before decided that it was an evasion of duty to remain at home at ease, enjoying the advantages of the wealth and social position which his father had won. Reasoning that every one should be able to earn his livelihood, he had applied for and obtained a clerkship, I think, in Liverpool. Here for a year or so, he had worked, living within his salary, which was pitiably small, until, by an equally ingenious course of reasoning, it occurred to him that he was filling the place of a man poorer than himself, who might need the money which he was earning. Relinquishing his position he returned home, and by all accounts profited largely, by a revulsion of feeling, from all the advantages which he had theretofore despised. He had read law, as had Stevenson, and was admitted to the Bar as an advocate about the same time, though, like his friend, his practice counted for naught. With his considerable fortune, a sincere desire to do something in the world for himself, without apparently any very definite idea as to how he should apply his not inconsiderable abilities, he passed through life without making real any of the dreams that, in the days of which I write, were common property with us all. His character, about this time, has been well described by R. L. S., in a fragment written in San Francisco in 1880.

"The fourth of these friends was Sir Walter Simpson, son of Sir James who gave chloroform to the world. . . . His was a slow-fighting mind. You would see him at times wrestle for a minute at a time with a refractory jest, and perhaps fail to throw it at the end. . . . He was shy of his virtues and his talents, and above

all of the former. He was even ashamed of his own sincere desire to do right. . . . Simpson would show himself not only kind but full of exceptional delicacies. Some of them I did not appreciate till years after they were done and perhaps forgotten by him. I have said his mind was slow, and in this he was an opposite, and perhaps an antidote, to Bob. I have known him battle a question sometimes with himself, sometimes with me, month after month for years; he had an honest stubbornness in thinking, and would neither let himself be beat nor cry victory." * In our association I chiefly remember him as ballast for our clipper-ship, whose sail-plan was a trifle excessive for the hull, and caused us at times to steer an erratic course; yet no one was more ready than he to lend a hand, and a heartfelt interest, in all our activities. As Stevenson has described Barbizon as he knew it, Siron's hotel was less an inn than a club. Like any other club, the edicts of non-admission were based upon principles difficult to explain; but, as we all of differing nationalities dwelt in harmony, so, in common, by various means, an unwelcome guest was made to feel that there were other quarters of the globe where his presence might be more desired. With one such sentence of eviction Simpson was actively concerned.

The stage one evening had dropped at Siron's door a dapper little man, whose London raiment proclaimed him English, but whose general inconspicuousness effectually concealed the fact that he was a cad, as a verdict delivered before a day had passed unanimously declared him to be. We were in no degree intolerant,

* "Life of Robert Louis Stevenson," by Graham Balfour. Vol. I., p. 106.

and had borne, with true appreciation of certain good qualities, the society of a youth from the British Isles, who wore at all times when visible to us a field glass strapped to his person, for all the world like 'Arry on 'is 'oliday, who cheerfully murdered the king's English whenever he spoke; and who had recently departed, eloping with one of Siron's maid-servants under a mistaken idea that it was the proper thing to do in France. He had, however, in some mysterious way, escaped this deadliest of all classifications. The deadliest, we were all agreed, for while France and my own native land, as we Americans were not infrequently reminded, can produce many varieties of the objectionable persons, England seems to have evolved the type of the cad and to retain him for her own.

Immediately after the first dinner, where the new arrival took his place and remained unnoticed during the somewhat noisy meal, he approached me in the courtyard, gave me his card, bearing a name which I have forgotten, and asked that I should present him to my friends.

This I cordially assured him was entirely unnecessary, that the unwritten law governing intercourse at a French *table d'hôte* permitted his joining in the conversation and addressing whomsoever he pleased, with the certainty of receiving polite consideration. The next morning at coffee, and again at the mid-day meal, my advice was followed, with so much satisfaction to the stranger that, by dinner-time, there had grown an undefined suspicion that he might be a trifle cheeky. This his talk at dinner confirmed; how it would be difficult to describe, but, by the time that cheese and

coffee had appeared, the poor man had not a friend in the world.

Worse was yet to come, however, as a number of the intimates gave themselves up to innocent horse-play in the court, vaulting over chairs piled one on another, and performing various other feats of agility, where the lithe and nervous Bob excelled. As he concluded some such feat we clapped our hands; whereat, in answer to our applause, he removed his hat and, with his hand on his heart, bowed low, in mock acceptance of our plaudits. As he replaced his hat the newcomer, who stood behind him, moved by a most mistaken sense of humour, struck the brim, causing the hat to fall to the ground. Bob's figure became tense and, though not tall, he appeared to tower as, with a perfectly even *white* sort of voice, he said, "Pick that up," indicating the hat which had rolled away on the ground. The offender did so. "Now dust it off." It was done. "Replace it carefully on my head." By this time our silence had become intolerable, and the mistaken humourist, having obeyed these commands like one in a dream, broke out in clamorous excuse. He had been told that there was no ceremony at Barbizon, everything, he had been assured, was free and easy. He had intended no offence, but simply wanted to join in the fun. He was allowed to finish, and then Bob, who had hardly relaxed a muscle, with the same even voice from which the restrained anger relapsed gradually to patient scorn, replied: "Perhaps some time—though not here, I trust—you will learn that where the greatest latitude prevails the utmost nicety of conduct must be observed. You can do things

in church, at home, that you can't do in Barbizon." Abashed but not enlightened, a night's reflection had not brought wisdom to the unhappy wight when, meeting Simpson at coffee before any of the others had appeared, he lightly turned off the occurrence of the night before, and then volunteered the information that, as a student of character, we appeared to him a "rum lot," but that he had "sized us up" entirely to his own satisfaction. "Indeed," said the slow and patient Simpson, luring him to the edge of the precipice, "it would be curious to learn if your 'sizing up' was correct." Thus urged, the artless youth detailed his conception of the various characters of those sojourning at the inn. Exactly what he said, Simpson, who had his own sense of humour, never told, declaring that it "was quite too dreadful," but at the last begged that he should be favoured with a portrayal of his own characteristics. "Oh, you, it's easy to see through you," bleated the unfortunate, "you're the all-round British sport." Nothing occurred during the day after Simpson had related the morning interview, and the artless prattle of the condemned went on through the time of dinner.

It so happened that after dinner we had arranged to make a nocturnal visit to the Caverne des Brigands, one of the show-places beloved of tourists, where (possibly) at one time robbers may have foregathered. It is a tolerably capacious cave, with a rude fireplace of rocks in one corner, and a vent by which the smoke of a fire may escape. During the day it was occupied by an old man, who drove a fairly profitable trade in selling lukewarm beer to visiting tourists, but at night it was deserted. Here we would repair with the necessary

ingredients for preparing punch, and when the lurid flames of the brandy we burned in an old black kettle lit up the interior of the cave, the effect was sufficiently picturesque. The walk to and from the cave was the best part of the expedition, and when, as now, the moon was at its full, it was one of the "things to do."

I had suggested this particular excursion, and our smaller coterie had been extended by my invitation and that of others, so that we numbered perhaps twenty strong as we advanced down the moonlit aisles of the forest. Suddenly some one said, "Do you know that that cad has come along?" We were at the head of our little procession, Simpson, the Stevensons, and I, and acting as the host I at once proposed to read the law to the intruder.

Quite eagerly Simpson put me aside. "No, let me," he said, his accent becoming, as it would under stress of excitement, quite broadly Scotch. With him I retraced my steps to where, following in the rear, walked our enemy. "It's a fine night," quoth Simpson, whose accent I shall not attempt to reproduce. "You appear to be walking; may I ask where you are going?" "To the Cavern of the Brigands," answered the luckless one, "I've never been there, and so I thought I'd just join." "Ye'll not go there to-night," bluntly responded Simpson, "for the place will be quite filled with a *private* party, and if ye wish to walk I'd suggest that the *grande route* to Fontainebleau is open to ye." Standing transfixed under the cruelty of his sentence, we left him. We saw him no more, for he rose with dawn, and fired *not* with hope he vanished, and Barbizon, the abode of law-restricted lawlessness, mourned not his loss.

XII

OUR WORK, OUR PLAY, AND OUR THOUGHTS

WHAT was it that rendered our sojourn in Fontainebleau and its outlying villages so influential in our lives and of such compelling charm that, whenever after I met with Bob or Louis, we resumed our intercourse as though intervening time and the many accidents along the way were banished, and we were once more at the threshold of our life?

The common interest of our projected life-work was undoubtedly at the root of this close and enduring association, but probably the strongest factor was that, though of nationality so dissimilar, of early influences so completely disassociated, we were, for the first time and in common, enjoying the large liberty of thought and action that in France is vouchsafed to the children of the arts. This was to us as is the breath of life; for no matter how sympathetic a restrained circle may be in other lands to the embryonic artist, no such environment can replace his universal acceptance and the dignity of the position accorded him, which for so many centuries has made that country the *alma mater* of the arts.

We know with what little favour the chosen vocation of Louis Stevenson was regarded at home, and how he had been obliged to adopt a profession esteemed more respectable. His cousin, to whom Louis wrote a few months before his death, "You wouldn't imitate, hence

you kept free—a wild dog outside the kennel," never forgot those early days in Edinburgh. Later in life, when writing of Velasquez, in explanation of the independence of the Spanish master's art, upspringing like a flower in the arid soil of "a bigoted and fantastically ceremonious court," he evidently reverts to his own experience. "Many old men, reared in the puritanical and hypocritical Edinburgh of the past, could tell you the private reactionary effect of that life of repression and humbug upon a decent genuine man. That you may not think at all, or act for yourself, is to add the very zest of piracy to experiment in life and originality in thought. Where public profession is manifestly a lie and public manners a formal exaggeration, life becomes a chest with a false bottom which opens into a refuge for the kindlier, wiser, and more ardent among human beings."

These conditions had borne hard upon my friends, and though in many ways my earlier lot had been happier, the neophyte in art in the days of my youth in our newer country was a little considered and solitary figure—his survivor even to-day having no very definite place in our social fabric. Hence, with something of the joy of colts let out to pasture, we had embraced the wider horizon, and above all, the untrammeled liberty that was unquestionally accorded to our kind in the pleasant land of France.

In after years, according to the manners and customs of our several countries, we affronted existing conditions and each in our way became very respectable dray-horses; but when met together, some whiff of keener air from the plains of Fountainebleau blew our way, and the coltish spirit of our youth was reawakened.

Art and life were such synonymous terms with us, in those days, that to have as virtually our only associates men who, almost without exception, were devoted to some form of art, lent joy to existence—even when intimacy was foregone and the relations were purely formal. Their mere numbers, however, ensured enough variety of opinions to make the interchange of thought wholesome and to keep our minds active; while the prosecution of our actual work added the healthy influence of practice to theory.

There were few drones in this busy hive of art, but of these Louis was apparently the most consistent. We have learned since how many impressions of scenes and manners were garnered from this apparent idleness, and through what a formative period in his work he was passing at the time. But I never remember him withdrawing to the seclusion of his room on the plea of work to be done, or in the long afternoons spent in his company, while I was industriously "spoiling canvas," as with more truth than I imagined we were wont to say with facetious intent, can I recall him as busy with paper and pencil. Even the book, which was his frequent companion, was more than likely left unopened. On the other hand, it is with gratifying frequency that I find in his published works ideas and reflections born of that time, and in many instances phrases and incidents that bring back some special place in the forest, or the life that we lived at Barbizon, Grez, or Montigny-sur-Loing. Industrious idleness it was to him; for his mind was a treasure-house, where every addition to its store was carefully guarded against the day of need. Many incidents of our common experience, long

forgotten by me, I have thus met in fresh guise in after years; and in most cases I imagine that it was his memory and not his notes that served him—at least of these last there was no visible evidence at the time. Despite our intimacy we lived so much in the present, each day bringing its quota of fresh experience, that it was long after in interchange of reminiscent talk that I learned of his earlier life, of the days when he was "ordered South," and of the storm and stress of his adolescent years.

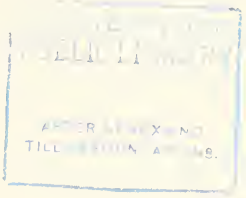
Though it was considered "good form" in our circle to expatiate at length upon the work that we were doing, and to display it on every occasion in the most unblushing manner, he was an exception to the rule; vague mention of the few things he had published reached our ears, but no copies of them were produced; and it was not until the summer of 1876 that I first saw his work printed—the essay entitled "Forest Notes" in the "Cornhill" for May of that year.

I remember now a slight feeling of disappointment as I read this first specimen of his work; a feeling perhaps akin to that expressed by a little girl, the daughter of a well-known writer in New York, to whom a copy of the "Child's Garden of Verses" had been given: "Huh, I don't think much of those verses; *I think things just like them myself.*"

We were living the life described in this essay; one passage recalls the sketch of mine that in colour is the "only proof we have that Louis's hair was ever light"; and, though it admirably stands the test of his own definition of the difference between the work of the amateur and that of the writer master of his craft, "never to put

Sketch in oils of Robert Louis Stevenson, in the Bas Bréau,
Fontainebleau, Autumn of 1875

"The only proof we have that Louis's hair was ever light"



into two pages the matter of one," it nevertheless appeared to me at the time to be less than I expected from the impression that his conversation and the charm of his presence had created.

The charm of his presence was both appealing and imperative, and though for other friends—for Bob especially—the ties that bind young men together and lay the foundations for lifelong friendships were quite as strong, Louis, quite unconsciously, exercised a species of fascination whenever we were together. Fascination and charm are not qualities which Anglo-Saxon youths are prone to acknowledge, in manly avoidance of their supposedly feminizing effect, but it was undoubtedly this attractive power which R. L. S. held so strongly through life; and which, gentle though it may have been, held no trace of dependence or weakness, that led Edmund Gosse to exclaim, when I chanced to meet him at a crowded reception in New York long before Stevenson had attained a trans-Atlantic reputation: "I am told that you are a friend of Louis Stevenson. Do you know any one in the world that you would better like to have walk in on us at the present moment?"

The charm, therefore, of the long afternoons spent with him in the woods, his book thrown aside, the long fingers twisting cigarettes of thread-like dimensions,—I have never known any one to roll so thin a cigarette as Stevenson,—and the constant flow of talk and interchange of thought come back to me like the opening chapters of a book, which one has perused with increasing delight, only to find it at the end by "a wilful convulsion of brute nature" finished too soon.

This is the recollection of the time passed alone with him or when Bob was present; but, when our whole company was gathered together, the talk took a more turbulent course and generally with good humour, but always with the "engaging frankness of youth," much banter was tossed to and fro. One witticism recurs to me that afterward attained respectability in the staid columns of the "Saturday Review"; that was, I believe, first provoked by the indignant protest of the gallophile of our party, against the character of certain criticisms of the manners and customs of the land where we sojourned. "Don't mind him," drawled the insular critic, "he is *privately* a Frenchman."

As already described, the two Stevensons and the writer occasionally drifted out of the English-speaking circle and had experiences more tinged with the local colour of the village life. One such experience I should hesitate to write, perhaps, as it seems like taking a posthumous revenge for the indiscretions of my friend, who did not scruple to portray an encounter that one may chance to have had with the seductive qualities of the wine of Roussilon in the pages of "The Wrecker," and then make plain its reference in the Epilogue addressed to me. As this other experience was, however, unique in my long frequentation of the society of R. L. S., it may figure here as a detail in my portrayal of the man.

One morning Siron took the three of us aside and explained that that evening a dinner was to be given by him in honour of the baptism of his first grandchild, and that, as it was manifestly impossible for him to invite all the sojourners at his inn, he had flatteringly chosen us from their number, and desired our presence

at the dinner. We had, however, a previous engagement to pass the evening with our friend La Chèvre; but, seeing Siron's evident disappointment, we promised to come in later and assist in properly launching the innocent grandchild upon the troubled waves of life.

When, after a pleasant evening with our friends at the end of the village, and the customary supper washed down with some excellent white wine, we arrived at the scene of the baptismal dinner, the festivities were at their height. The table had been spread at one end of the long garden behind the hotel and some forty guests were present, including the proud parents, all the relations near or remote, and the chef and other servants of the hotel. Coffee had been served and song was in order, each of the guests in turn aiming to shine in sentimental or comic vein; the chef, already far gone in liquor, at once rising ready to burst into melody as each singer finished his contribution, and being as promptly suppressed. The proud father of the babe was one of the forest guards, an Alsatian, who, like so many of the sons of that unhappy province, had been given his choice after the annexation to leave his native province or remain and become a subject of the hated German empire. He had chosen to remain French and had been rewarded with his post as one of the guardians of the forest. Our arrival only temporarily checked the flow of song, more wine was brought, many toasts were drunk, and, as the whole atmosphere seemed charged with the vapours of a Gargantuan repast plentifully liquefied by an abundance of the juice of the grape, it was not long before we three, ordinarily temperate youths, rose to the festival

heights where our friends were enthroned. The muse was largely patriotic, the wounds of the late war were hardly healed, and the presence of one who had given up the hearths of his fathers at the call of patriotism, dictated the choice of the post-prandial *répertoire*. We heard thundered forth how at Reichshoffen death had closed up the ranks of the *cuirassiers*, and various other songs bewailing the sorrows of France and vowing vengeance on her enemies, when the forest guard rose precipitately and, with an embracing movement, drew the three of us into the cool recesses of the garden. Once there he turned, the tears streaming down his visage and cried: "Now, *Messieurs*, we will weep together for the sorrows of France!" After that my memory is somewhat confused, though I have a continuing vision of the white-robed chef bobbing up serenely at stated intervals and beginning a song that as frequently was forcibly checked amid his expostulations, until, at last, we three found ourselves in the moonlit village street outside the inn.

It must have been long past midnight, but instead of seeking our beds, as prudence—and our condition—dictated, we sought the seclusion of the forest. There, at the end of the long *allée*, chequered by light and shade, we came to a space more open, where the ground was silvered by the full flood of the high-riding moon. Here, in the middle of the road, we stretched ourselves at full length and discoursed—we could still talk—of many things of grave import, no doubt, though they escape my treacherous memory at the present time. How long we stayed there in this beatific state I know not, but finally Bob, rising to a sitting position, made

the surprising statement that we were three idiots and might better be in bed. Somewhat pained, we nevertheless agreed with his concluding suggestion and, without too much difficulty, retraced our steps to our lodging.

Here I have a vision of Bob waving a bed-room candle from the stair leading to his room on the floor above that where Louis and I had ours, and sternly commanding me to see that his cousin got safely to bed. I took this command with a seriousness befitting the occasion, and at last, when Louis was properly robed for the night, I concluded my friendly service by carefully tucking in the covering. This I did in so conscientious a manner that my friend, smiling blandly from his pillow, murmured: "How good you are, you remind me of my mother." In after years, though I am forced to admit that the version of this story given by R. L. S. varied from my own truthful recital, we have often laughed over the baptism of Siron's grandchild, and his shade may now be smiling at me as I write.

Perhaps it may be well to explain here how little intemperance played a part in all our student gatherings. What little there was may be laid, I fear, at the door of the aliens; for among my French comrades it was virtually unknown. I can still see the extraordinary air of the connoisseur adopted by one of these last—by my friend Cocles, whose character I have described some pages back—when at the conclusion of a dinner he would consult the list of *vins fins*. "We will probably not order anything," he would gravely state, "but the very names of these wines have an aroma of their own." And then, lingering over the syllables, he would murmur, half to himself, the enchanting titles of the

aristocratic offspring of the invigorating sun and the fruitful earth, concluding, perhaps, by ordering a modest half bottle of some well-known vintage, which, drop by drop, sharing with an appreciative friend, he would savour to the dregs.

With Stevenson, also, appreciation of the taste and the flavour of romance, which clings to the tradition of good wine, was as keen as his abhorrence of the intemperance that was common in Scotland. On the one hand, I remember his saying reflectively, over a final bottle of the Beaujolais-Fleury at Lavenues on the eve of one of his visits home, "I wish that we could get this in Edinburgh, for you don't know how I dread returning there and adapting myself to the ration of drink usual in the land of my fathers." On the other hand, I remember his exclamation, "Don't that make you just love France," when I told him the legend that there was a standing order in the French Army that no detachment of troops should ever pass the narrow strip of land on which ripens the noble *cru* of Clos Vougeot, without presenting arms.

Sins of omission and of commission were plentiful enough in my time among the students, as they had been probably since the first students sat on their tresses of straw and conversed in Latin in the rue de la Harpe, giving its name to the students' quarter, and as they are to-day within its enlarged boundaries; but over-indulgence in drink is not one of them, and it is as a somewhat extraordinary occurrence that I have ventured to tell this tale of "when the wine had done its rosy deed."

XIII

A PARIS WINTER AND A FIRST EFFORT

ANOTHER summer had fled, our little company at Barbizon had dispersed, Louis and Sir Walter Simpson had returned to Scotland, and others of us were again domiciled in Paris. Work in the atelier of our master was resumed and our life was much the same as that of the preceding year. One incident of our playtime comes back, and shows Bob in the spirit in which his cousin drew him in the episode of the young man with the cream-tarts, in the "New Arabian Nights," as the Squire of Dames and as the temporary householder of the Superfluous Mansion in its sequel, the "Dynamiter." In all three of these diverse characters resides some particle of the frolic nature of my friend; though, as the sequel of this incident proves, the description of Challoner, in the latter book, especially applied to him. "He was the spirit of fine courtesy, and would have blushed to fail in his devoirs to any lady; but, in the other scale, he was a man averse from amorous adventures."

We were loitering among the book-stalls which line the quai on the left bank of the Seine near the Pont des Saints Pères. It was a fine day in the late autumn; great white clouds scudding through the blue overhead, when we saw two young girls at the entrance to the bridge, carrying between them a huge basket laden with freshly starched linen. In nautical phrase, they

were making heavy weather against the wind and there was a fine swirl of skirts and eager effort to prevent their precious burden from following the fallen leaves which danced along the quai.

After watching them a minute, Bob proposed that we should go to their assistance. This my more sober spirit refused, arguing that distance lent enchantment to any *blanchisseuse*, no matter how pretty, as these particular specimens certainly were. Before my logic had time to halt him, Bob had left my side and, doffing his hat as he approached them, accosted the two girls. In pantomime I saw their start of surprise and their laughing protest, but Bob was not to be withstood. He must have appeared strange to them with his trim figure and well set up shoulders encased in a brown velvet coat rather the worse for wear; but, on the whole, as different in appearance from the average student of the quarter as from the average English visitor to Paris, in whose ranks his accent might have seemed to place him. I was too far away to hear the words of their parley; but his eager, yet courteous, insistence evidently won the day; for, after a moment, the two young women relinquished their charge, and my comrade, passing his arm through the handle of the basket, the group of three took their way across the bridge. As far as I could see them the two girls, with much gesticulation, appeared to chatter with a mixture of surprise and glee, to which Bob answered as gayly.

"Where did you go?" I asked him that evening when he had rejoined me at dinner, discretion not seeming to be demanded in such a case. "A beastly way up

toward Montmartre, in the rue des Martyrs," he answered, apparently not at all elated. "I stayed below while they delivered the wash. Afterward I invited them to have something to drink at a *marchand du vin;* and then one of the little fools acted as if she thought it my duty to make love to her."

"And you failed to rise to the occasion?"

"You know very well that that wasn't my game," answered my friend with a bored look.

"Then why, in heaven's name, did you waltz half way across Paris, dragging a laundry basket, in company with two giggling girls?"

"Blest if I know," was the only answer my enigmatic comrade would deign to make.

This absurd adventure was evidently prompted by the same spirit which led the two cousins, on a trip to London, about this time, to visit the Grosvenor gallery simply attired with blue Jerseys in place of the frock coat of afternoon wear. There they espied one of their very good friends, in close communion with a number of young women, listening to his explanation of the works of art surrounding them. This group they promptly joined, whispering to the abashed *cicerone*, at a loss to explain his ill-dressed friends: "Say that we are two seafaring men whose æsthetic education you have undertaken."

At Barbizon picturesqueness of costume, either deliberately cultivated or worn from convenience and economy, was the order of the day and in the students' quarter in Paris, though there are some surprising exceptions to the rule, conventionality of dress is not exacted. Bob's careless dress was sufficiently becom-

ing, while Louis's attire, as he has attested in descriptions of more than one misadventure, was apt to bring upon him suspicion and distrust; but in these days they were both so absolutely rebellious to the conditions from which they were newly escaped, that the garb in which they often chose to appear must have been a sore trial to their friends of the conventional type.

All this winter, however, Louis was facing the rigours of his northern home, while his cousin and our friends of the summer were working in the school or, later, as the season advanced, busying themselves with the pictures which, with varying fortunes, we were to send to the Salon.

Soon after the first of the year the annual dinner which the atelier tendered our master took place. For these banquets one of the restaurants on the boulevards in the centre of Paris was chosen, and they were always of a more or less ceremonious character, at least until the hour when the master left us. Then the livelier spirits of youth were given freer rein, and the celebration finally broke up at a late hour; the company, marching two by two, frequently giving vent to their artistic enthusiasm in song, across Paris to our own quarter.

This year a number of the students of Duran had united to express their enthusiasm for the master by a poem which, set to an appropriate air, was sung in his presence at the dinner. Our master was a man whose early struggles had taught him the value of self-assertion in the critical *milieu* of Paris; and, at that time and since, could not be accused of false modesty. In

the view of several of us, however, the excess of laudation with which this song was thickly spread was calculated to bring the blush of shame to a bronze statue. In point of fact, Duran had politely demurred to his enthusiastic pupils' laboured praise, and had been heard to murmur at the conclusion of the song: "Oh, no, my children—*mes enfants, c'est trop*—it is too much."

I regret that I cannot remember the words of this song, but their general theme was the exaggerated comparison of our master to the great painters of the past. Italy had her Titian, Spain her Velasquez, and their special merits were particularized, while each verse ended with the antistrophe "but France has Carolus-Duran!" The conviction with which three of our comrades lined up at the piano, where a fourth played the accompaniment, sang these laudatory couplets might have touched a heart of stone; but with some of us they merely stirred our sense of humour. It was quite long, there were at least four verses, but during their performance Bob, Enfield, and myself, the black sheep of the Duran fold, though we jesuitically joined in the chorus, were congratulating ourselves that we, too, had a song.

This was largely of Bob's composition, though Enfield and I had been of some assistance to our comrade, struggling in the meshes of French verse, and we proposed to wait the moment when our master had left us, and then seek the suffrages of our comrades.

Of this song I can remember but one verse, though I think it had more; but no copy is, so far as I know, extant, and the other couplets have faded from my memory. I can only make the lamest of prose transla-

tions of our doggerel* and so give it in its original French—original in more senses than one:

Esquivant les lois de la construction;
Nous mettons dans nos fonds,
Des couleurs très frappantes;
Ne dessinant jamais, jamais nous ne finissons;
Pour nous la nature n'est qu'une tache,
Et Carolus-Duran!

REFRAIN

Les élèves de Carolus-lus-lus-lus,
Les élèves de Carolus-lus-lus-lus,
Les élèves de Carolus-lus-lus-lus,
De Carolus-Duran, avec un D!

It seems to savour of irreverence that we could thus ruthlessly deny the principles we were sworn to maintain; to reek with ingratitude to play upon the name of the *patron;* but it was our comrades, of course, that we were really guying, and not the undoubted talent of our master. No sooner had our master been helped into his overcoat, had been handed his hat and cane, and had been respectfully escorted to his carriage, than Enfield and a few others who had been let into the secret, burst into song. The effect upon the

* Avoiding with intent the laws of construction;
In our backgrounds we use the most violent colour.
We never draw—much less do we finish;
For us nature is only a spot †—and Carolus-Duran!

REFRAIN

The pupils of Carolus-lus-lus-lus,
The pupils of Carolus-lus-lus-lus,
The pupils of Carolus-lus-lus-lus,
Of Carolus-Duran, spelt with a D!

† *Tache*, used in a technical sense, is difficult of translation; the spot of a colour or of light and shade in relation to other colours or tones within the pictorial vision, is so denominated, technically, in French.

whole number of pupils was electrical. Even those who, a few minutes before, had so outrageously sung the praises of the master, were forced to join in, and on our homeward way the good citizens of the comparatively quiet quarter where we lived, heard in the early hours of the morning, chanted in a great variety of accents, the strange refrain of "Carolus-lus-lus-lus." From that time forward the serious effort in which our master was compared to Titian and Velasquez was relegated to oblivion, and our cynical chorus became the official song of the atelier; always sung, *bien entendu*, out of the hearing of our master.

Perhaps he, in his turn, may be endowed with a sufficient sum of humour to enjoy the burlesque iconoclasm of these halting verses, but I know of none of his grateful students who would have put it to the test.

Here, as typical of the independent action to which an otherwise perfectly respectful and submissive pupil may be driven, the story of my first Salon picture may find place.

I had arrived at a point in my atelier work where I was thoroughly discouraged. Many of my comrades, some of whom I felt to be in no wise artistically superior to myself, were able, with a certain regularity, to paint each week a creditable study in the school. As I now look back, there was a certain conventional character to many of these, and they had perhaps more merit as examples of submissive acceptation of our master's principles than evidence of individual insight. In my own effort to avoid what I felt to be a mannerism of another's invention, I floundered hopelessly, to my master's despair, though he was most considerate

and appeared to understand intuitively my mental attitude.

At last, without consulting him, I took a desperate resolve. As I could do nothing in the school I would see what I could accomplish in my own studio. I procured a large canvas, for I was nothing if not ambitious, and began a composition of a life-sized figure and a beautiful greyhound, that was then my constant companion. Barely six weeks remained before the day when contributions to the Salon were due, and I worked in a species of frenzy early and late.

One morning, when this term was half elapsed, I met M. Duran just as I was entering my studio. He greeted me and inquired the reason for my absence from the atelier in the past weeks, and I was obliged to confess that I was trying to paint something for the Salon. His eyebrows rose with a look of doubt for my success. "However," he added kindly, "let me see what you are doing."

With all the trepidation of a schoolboy caught in mischief, I spiritlessly ushered him before my canvas. Its size, and the comparative difficulty of my undertaking brought reproof at once. With little consideration for my feelings, he commanded me to abandon then and there what I could not hope to finish before the Salon opened; what, in any case, my knowledge would not permit me to carry to a successful finish. He cited one of my comrades, a crack pupil of our school, and praised his modesty in preparing for his *dêbut* a simple study of a head; contrasting his conduct with my ill-judged temerity.

It was a bad quarter of an hour and, as I was miser-

ably conscious of the shortcoming of my effort, I proffered no defence and Duran left me, probably thinking that my silence meant acquiescence to his counsel. For a brief moment I entertained the thought of such obedience, but as quickly I realized that to abandon my effort then would mean to me complete surrender and tacit acceptance of a place in the ranks of the vanquished.

Acceptance by the Salon jury, while it would mean much, was but half of my contention; the approval of my own artistic environment—the reward which encourages an artist, young or old, more than any other—was partly mine; for some of my fellows thought Duran's strictures unduly harsh, and so I persevered.

The twentieth of March was the fateful date that marked the last delay for the delivery of pictures to the Salon. Painting up to the last minute, while the impatient carrier waited, I at last resigned my precious canvas to his hands, and, following the universal custom prevalent then among young painters, at once hied me to the Palais de l'Industrie.

This building, a relic of an earlier Exposition Universelle, has been swept away to be replaced by one far more ornate, though less well adapted to the exhibition of works of art, which was built for the Exposition of 1900. As it then stood on the Champs Elysées, a door at the end of the building, nearest the Arc de Triomphe, was assigned to the reception of pictures, and on this last day a compact mass of large vans, from which paintings, some of them of huge dimensions, were being rapidly unloaded, was drawn up before it. Threading a path through these, the porters carried their burdens, precious in the eyes of their producers

at least; many of these last followed near, thrilling with fear lest in the confusion some accident might befall their pictures. At the doors bewildered police officers vainly endeavoured to keep out a constantly increasing number of students, models, and artists, all intent on taking part in the joyous ceremony, which marked the termination of their labours for the exhibition of the year. Once inside, for by the aid of excuses more or less plausible, or by concerted rushes, entrance could be generally effected, the spectators lined the steps and the landing of the monumental stairway. A narrow passage was left, through which to the galleries on the upper floor the various pictures were borne. At times eight or ten perspiring workmen would bear an enormous canvas; lesser numbers would carry smaller works; but one and all of these canvases, subjected to the criticism of a lawless band, would elicit some comment, shouted so that all could hear, that more or less critically characterized the picture, then being conveyed to its final judgment before the regularly constituted jury. Of course, a majority of these critics had work of their own in the mass, and, when one could single it out borne in the slow moving procession up the stairway, ears were strained to discover in the jeering comment some murmur of admiration.

The pupils of various masters essayed to provoke applause as the work of their teacher would be carried by, applause which would be as quickly drowned in the cat calls and groans of the adherents of rival schools. Grave religious pictures would be received by parodies of the chants of the church, voiced in no religious spirit, and the cries of a menagerie broken loose would greet

the work of the animal painters. It was well that the adoring wives, appreciative husbands, and fond parents of the subjects of the various portraits were not present, for the remarks on their appearance were not chastened in style or limited in their application.

This annually recurring ceremony only ceased with the entrance of the last picture at nightfall, when the critical mob, hoarse with the intensity of its vehement appreciation, was ejected, and the great doors were closed, leaving the pictures to face the awful ordeal of judgment by the members of the jury on painting.

Then followed nearly six weeks of torturing suspense, until an official notification brought the glad tidings that my "Rêverie—in the time of the First Empire"—for so my picture was entitled—had won its inclusion in the Salon of 1876. As may be imagined, I was among the first to enter the exhibition halls on the momentous first of May, the "varnishing day," reserved for the contributors and for all the notabilities of art, letters, and the drama, supported by those who make up the "Tout Paris"; which is never more essentially Parisian than in thus gathering once a year to do homage to the arts, before the doors of the Salon are opened to the general public.

It is a thrilling experience to seek for the first time, among the thousands of pictures which line the walls of this great exhibition, your maiden effort. You first search feverishly through the pages of the catalogue, to make assurance doubly sure, and at last you find the entry: No. 5368: its title and your name, followed by "born in the United States, pupil of M. Carolus-Duran." Guided by the letters which designate the various

rooms, you search in those which bear the initial of your name and, at last, there, on the second row, a strangely shrunken frame encloses a gruesome work which you are forced to recognize, with painful emotion, as the picture that, in its bright new frame, looming large in your small studio, and fresh in its newly applied colour some six weeks ago, you modestly believed to be "not so bad."

You learn afterward to distrust this first impression which your work produces and reserve your judgment for a calmer and more impartial view, when the shock of hasty comparison with other and better work is past, and you can temperately decide that, if the distance to be traversed before you arrive at definite achievement is great, you have at least started on the journey. It is well that this is so, for if it were otherwise the Seine is conveniently near, and the number of young artists seeking in its water oblivion from disillusion would be disproportionately great.

The effect of this first impression was no doubt somewhat visible on my countenance as I dutifully sought my master, who stood surrounded by an admiring group, before one of his own works in an adjoining room. "You here," he exclaimed with some surprise, "you have a picture accepted then; let me see it!"

I led the way and Duran frowned as he saw the forbidden fruit of my effort. "And so you have disobeyed me?" looking intently at the picture for a moment. Then he turned to me and, probably appeased by my dejected aspect, he said, not unkindly: "Well, I am sure that now you agree with me, that it was unwise to attempt so much."

Reverie—in the time of the First Empire. Salon of 1876 and N. A. D. Exhibition, 1877

From the painting by Will H. Low, in the possession of John Boyd Thacher, Esq., Albany, N. Y.

Well, here is the picture reproduced in these pages, and, looking at it dispassionately, with the accrued experience which the lapse of thirty years has brought, it has, with all its faults, certain merits. Above all, I am glad to have taken, as it were, the bit in my teeth, and to have done it when I did; for I take my case to be typical, and there comes to every earnest student a critical moment when he must resume in a work of his own the results of his study; and this he can best do in his own way, free from the direction or even the influence which up to that point he has wisely obeyed. "The time comes when a man should cease prelusory gymnastic, stand up, put a violence on his will, and, for better or worse, begin the business of creation."*

After its appearance in the Salon, the "Rêverie" was sent home in the following year and, at the exhibition of the National Academy of Design in the spring of 1877, bore its part as one of the elements of disturbance which resulted in the formation of the Society of American Artists, whose history is too recent and familiar to find more than cursory mention in these pages. Of even greater personal import to the writer, however, is the remembrance that this picture led to an acquaintance and subsequent friendship with Augustus Saint-Gaudens, whose death, as these lines are written,† closes a career that, more than that of any American artist, has been glorious in the truest sense; but whose eminence counts for less, to those who knew and loved him, than the irreparable loss of a true friend.

* "Fontainebleau—Village Communities of Painters," Robert Louis Stevenson.

† August 3, 1907.

XIV

MONTIGNY AND GREZ, SUMMER OF '76

WITH a lack of logic for which a kind destiny has exacted no penalty, an improvidence that now that "the grizzling pate the brain doth clear," I might be inclined to score severely—if called upon to advise the young—I had sought in the autumn of '75 to simplify my problematical future by taking me a wife. The lady whose spirit, then and since, was equal to the paradox of affronting a minimum of resources with a maximum of courage, proved at once to be *persona grata* to my intimates. Consequently there was no cessation of *camaraderie*, a not infrequent accompaniment to love's young dream; and our little circle simply opened wider to admit a new friend. For a short time the youthful *ménage* occupied the rooms at Barbizon, in the house of the mother Charlotte, where one of them had lived in his bachelor days; but, after the winter in Paris, the decision was taken to look for a place in the country, where they might become householders in a more serious sense.

The announced intention on the part of my friends to abandon Barbizon and give Grez a "serious trial," led us to the other side of the forest, and at Montigny-sur-Loing a modest habitation, built on the river-bank, with an arbour at the garden end that overlooked the water, was found.

Montigny is but a couple of miles from Grez, and is on the same river, which afforded an easy means of

communication for the canoes of my friends, and passage between the two villages was frequent. The little house and its immediate surroundings suggested to Stevenson the envoy which opens "Underwoods":

> Go, little book, and wish to all
> Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall;
> A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
> A house with lawns enclosing it;
> A living river by the door,
> A nightingale in the sycamore.

Even more descriptive, and equally poetic, is his prose reference in the essay on "Fontainebleau—Village Communities of Painters."

"Montigny has been somewhat strangely neglected; I never knew it inhabited but once, when Will H. Low installed himself there with a barrel of *piquette*, and entertained his friends in a leafy trellis above the weir, in sight of the green country and to the music of the falling water. It was a most airy, quaint, and pleasant place of residence, just too rustic to be stagey; and from my memories of the place in general, and that garden trellis in particular—at morning, visited by birds, or at night, when the dew fell and the stars were of the party—I am inclined to think perhaps too favourably of the future of Montigny."

Montigny has had its future, this little house changed and enlarged is now a riverside inn, many villas have been built and a new generation of artists come and go. The place, like Grez, suffers from obvious picturesqueness—compositions ready made are found on every hand and impart a superficial look to work done there—

but it has its quiet charm, and the limpid river framed in graceful trees, played a pleasant accompaniment that summer to our merry gatherings around the table spread in the arbour. Here one day our *déjeuner* was pleasantly interrupted, when a bevy of choir-boys, dressed in white and scarlet, filed into the house, sprinkling its walls with holy water, singing an old chant of the church to call down blessings on our home. It was the month of May, and from house to house in the village the little procession proceeded, in accordance with an old custom—a custom with which the master of the house was unfortunately unfamiliar—for, conscious that some reward was expected, he enthusiastically parted with one of his rare five-franc pieces, when a *largesse* of a few sous or half-a-dozen eggs, one of the boys carrying a basket to receive such gifts, was all that was habitual.

The barrel of light wine, the *piquette* which Stevenson remembered, was also the occasion of enlightening the neophyte householder on the manners and customs of the country. This *petit vin*, so light that it would hardly bear transportation to the next village, was an ideal beverage for the summer months. It was grown on the hills near the village, and learning that one of my neighbours had a surplus in store, I promptly entered into negotiation with him. It was not an important financial transaction, for the huge barrel, containing two hundred and twenty litres, cost but fifty francs—less than ten dollars. This amount I had paid, when I learned that there was a duty of three francs fifty centimes exacted by the government for the transfer from the vintner's cellar to mine. This I contended should be paid by the dealer and not by the purchaser,

From the arbour overhanging the river at Montigny-sur-Loing

and stood my ground firmly. At last in our long discussion, my peasant neighbour inquired darkly if I went to bed late; if by any chance I was up as late as ten o'clock? Mystified, I replied that I was frequently awake at that hour. "Very well, in that case wait this evening, the wine will be delivered."

With a guilty premonition of transgressing the laws of the country whose hospitality I enjoyed, I waited that evening, when, shortly before the appointed hour, there arose in the quiet street before my door a noise of iron wheels ringing clear on the paved descent, and the sound of many voices. Opening the door cautiously, I saw a group of six or eight surrounding my barrel of *piquette*, which was being conveyed to my door on a clumsily constructed hand-wagon. All was clearly visible in the moonlight, and the clamour, like that which accompanies any form of manual labor in France, was calculated to be heard by the prefect of the department of Seine et Marne, many miles away, to say nothing of the *gendarmerie* resident in the village. With visions of fines and possible imprisonment for my collusion with crime, I adjured the volunteer helpers of my dealer in wine to keep silent; and at last with many lurchings the great cask was conveyed across the little open court and placed on the threshold of the door. It was still plainly, flagrantly visible to the vigilant eyes of the law. Justice seemed strangely somnolent in Montigny that night, for my fellow criminals desisted at once from their labours, lit their pipes, and were apparently content to leave the incriminating evidence of our evasion of the excise tax in full view.

I, still apprehensive, begged them to get the cask in-

side the house where it would be concealed from sight, but was at once reassured: "*Soyez tranquille, Monsieur;* we know the law, all the excise officers and all the *gendarmes* in France might come now and they would have nothing to say. Your wine is within your door, and how it got there is nobody's affair." After a brief rest, the cask was finally landed in a corner of the hall under the stairs, where, after a few days, in order that the wine might clarify, it was broached and drawn from the spigot by great pitcherfuls. It slaked many a parched throat throughout the summer.

Meanwhile in Grez the Anglo-Saxon was in full possession of Chevillon's inn, to a much greater degree than Barbizon ever knew. Not only the men who first "discovered" Grez, but others, brought to the quiet inn the clamour of our English tongue, and a freedom of manners and customs that escapes geographical definition. This independence of conduct, to the astonishment of the rural population, they maintained at all times; ignoring completely the usages which, rude and simple as they are, centuries have imposed on the orderly country. The view of a stalwart gentleman clad in a straw hat, bathing trunks and bathing sandals as his only wear, traversing the village streets on his way to the *bureau de tabac* was not unusual; and at first must have rudely shaken the local ideas of the *convenances*. Behind the inn, in the long garden stretching to the river, the table was spread, and here a score or more would be seated for the mid-day meal, in this lightest of costumes, fresh from a dip in the river. When, as rarely occurred, a chance visitor of Gallic strain happened there, he rubbed his eyes, wondered if

The village street at Grez

he was still in France, and, puzzled by this foreign variety of the *laisser aller* common enough in other guises, which he could understand, in artist inns frequented by his own compatriots, soon departed.

They were largely amphibious, and with a devotion to "exercise" which worked havoc to the arts, the canoes multiplied, and the river up and down was explored, as I venture to say it had never been since it first took its interrupted course to the sea. Tubs were also put into requisition and races were organized, the competitors standing with double paddles urging their uncontrollable vessels to a goal, upsetting at frequent intervals, regaining their unwieldly craft, and at last, amid shrieks of derision, swimming ashore. Henry Enfield shone in these contests, and on the walls of the inn there yet remains an immortal work of mine where he is depicted upon an insecure footing in his tub, his blond beard dripping like that of a very Neptune, but his monocle still intact, as he was often seen that summer.

If this predilection for water, the foreign tongue in which they conversed, and other outlandish habits bred a belief that the inn and the village had been invaded by savages, the hostess of the inn, good Madame Chevillon, very shortly learned that their good nature and high spirits were infectious and their habits of bathing harmless, except possibly to themselves, so her strange guests soon won her favour, and in due time, though the village politely refused to express open approval, their presence was more than tolerated.

So strong indeed was the influence of our language, heard on every side, that the children of the village

caught the refrain of one of the songs the strangers sang, and it was a not uncommon occurrence to hear them along the village street singing:

> John Brown's body lies mouldering in the ground,
> As we go marching along,

the air correctly given, the words meaningless, of course, to them, pronounced with the drollest of accents. The youngest of the strangers, Lloyd Osbourne, then a boy of eight or ten, was the playmate of these children and, as his vocabulary in their tongue was limited, he once announced the capture of a minnow in a convenient mixture of the two languages. Returning there a few years ago, a grown man of thirty odd, and making his identity known, he was at once greeted: "Mon Dieu! how you have grown, and so you are '*le petit feesh*'?"

To-day, though these actors have seen the curtain rung down and their troupe dispersed, their little comedy is still pleasantly remembered by the older inhabitants of the village, which has resumed since many years the even tenor of its way. There are still two or three English or American residents—men who have lingered from the earlier time—but at the inn the influx of foreigners has ceased, and Grez as an artist community has had its day, even as Giverny, of later popularity, is now deserted by our compatriots in favour of Étaples or Montreuil.

During the summer of '76 I was a mere supernumerary in the company and saw comparatively little of Grez. I had assumed new responsibilities and was working with serious purpose to burst the bonds of the

student and to become a full-fledged and, above all, a self-supporting artist. This was no light task, but the rigour of my undertaking was considerably lightened by the companionship of my friends.

Our house at Montigny was a convenient port of call by the waterway, and the route overland was scarcely longer, so that nearly every day we entertained our friends. Here under the leafy trellis gathered round the sun-chequered table we held long symposiums, the subject of art ever uppermost.

One such discussion with Bob remains fresh in my memory, through the curious confirmation of a chance affirmation in our table-talk by after events. True to his love of realism, he was good enough to approve of some out-of-door work I had shown him, advising me strongly "to stick to that and drop my decorative game." He further insisted that outside of France, where the government kept it alive, the art of the decorator had no scope "except on pottery and dinner-plates," and cited the rather unfortunate official attempt to decorate the Houses of Parliament in England years before. Less from a spirit of prophecy than from a genial desire to disagree with my friend—though in justice to myself, even in those early days I had a sincere conviction that the painter is never more nobly employed than in covering large wall spaces—I took an opposite view.

I had in favour of my contention Baudry's recent work for the new Opera, and the project, then in course of execution, of decorating the Pantheon, which, though I did not at the time know it, was to give us the following year Puvis de Chavannes' superb series of panels. Warmed by my argument my fancy took a bolder flight,

and I described to my friend our newer country, renewed all the stock arguments about the coexistence of commercial progress journeying westward hand-in-hand with art, and boldly prophesied that when the day to build our civic monuments came, the painter and the sculptor would share with the architect the task of expressing our national glory. I fancy that I was eloquent; I know that I let the eagle scream to the full extent of his vocal organs; but the British lion, at the time, was in no wise daunted. Many years after Bob reverted to this talk when, in his capacity as a critic in London, he had become cognizant of the quasi-renascence of mural painting, not only in France and England, but of its even more considerable development, considering the conditions, in this country. He showed some curiosity to know why I had so strongly drawn my picture of the future, and seemed disappointed to learn that an innate desire to see some such accomplishment, rather than an intelligent perception of conditions that would lead to such a result, was the base of my contention.

The annals of this summer would not be complete without a description of a visit paid us by Gaudez and Cocles.

The mistress of the house had gone to the adjoining town of Nemours for a day's marketing, and the master, returning from painting in the fields, intent upon a solitary lunch, was met upon the threshold by the maid-of-all-work apparently in a state of great alarm. "Ah! Monsieur, how relieved I am to see you. Figure to yourself two strangers, gentlemen whom I have never seen, have been here, have insisted on entering

Springtime, Montigny-sur-Loing, 1876

From the painting by W. H. Low, in the collection of Sir George Drummond, Montreal

the house, have made themselves at home, have taken off their hats, coats, and waistcoats, left them on a chair, as you can see, and have gone away."

Even as she spoke, I looked up the street, and saw approaching my two Paris comrades, strangely clad. Each wore rough straw hats such as the peasants use, blue blouses shining new in stiff folds enveloped their bodies, and they clattered along in large sabots, meanwhile carrying their city shoes dangling by their strings. With a truly French sense of appropriateness of costume they had, on finding their friends absent, empioyed their time by visiting the village emporium and decking themselves in a uniform suitable for the simple life of the country. They were warmly welcomed, and there ensued a week literally devoted to laughter—rare even in a life that has liberally accepted Figaro's injunction to "hasten to laugh—to avoid tears."

What we did, beyond a number of usual pleasant excursions on the river, and to the more distant forest, where we picnicked at the *Mare aux Fées*, it would be difficult to describe, as I find to be so many baffling memories of days that seemed eventful. There are, however, certain natures that act as a foil to each other, and such were those possessed by my friends. The solemnly humorous mask of Cocles and the richly coloured sensuous face of Gaudez, offered no greater contrast than the wise satiric utterances of the first, opposed to the *bonhomie*, with a Rabelaisian touch, of the other.

The simple enjoyment of the country, which is a national trait of the French, undoubtedly contributed

much to a most enjoyable week. It may appear puerile that two grown and grave men should pass an afternoon in avowed parody of their Anglo-Saxon friends, in racing, their wooden shoes laden with pebbles to give them stability, upon the river back of the garden; but from this infantile play they—and others—managed to extract as much amusement as from more "grown-up" contests.

Our maid-of-all-work contributed an unwitting share to our gayety. Alexandrine, as she was fittingly named—possessing feet twice as long as a hexameter—was a sad coquette. Principles she had, protesting over much, but beauty had been denied her to quite an extraordinary degree. Some simple courtesy on the part of Cocles, common enough in a country where servants are treated as one of the family, had been misinterpreted by her susceptibility, and she had, in her most coquettish manner, given my friend to understand that she was not to be trifled with. Stifling his surprise, Cocles at once adopted an air of respectful adoration that, for the remainder of his stay, kept the ancient and ill-favoured maiden in a continual flutter. Our *cuisine*, fortunately, did not suffer from this, for, after the manner of her kind, she wooed her adorer by succulent dishes by which we all profited. When our friends had departed it took some days before our handmaiden descended from the pinnacle of her rosy dreams, and for the rest of the summer, whenever a letter was received from Cocles, it contained a madrigal to the address of Alexandrine, which I fear constantly failed to reach its destination.

Gaudez, whose jocose disposition never trifled with

the subject of art—I have seen him more than once skilfully descend from the heights of the most palpable absurdity and instantly assume a firm footing in the field of illuminative criticism—was of great comfort to me in resolving the doubts that Bob's influence had created. "Paint what you see about you," he counselled; "situated as you are, that is the best that you can do, but by no means limit your future undertaking to that. The artist is more than a recorder of things seen under local and accidental conditions, that more often than not confuse and destroy their veritable character. The wave of photographic realism will spend itself sooner or later, and then the artist of imaginative force, nourished by the study of nature, will come to the fore. True art is a method of expression, done by a gentleman who has something to say (*'un Monsieur qui a quelque chose à dire'*), in poetry or prose, paint or clay."

XV

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

THOUGH not living in Grez, much of it I saw and part of it I was, not infrequently, for no better conclusion to a day's work could be had than the pleasant walk thither, above the river bank and past the mill. At the crowded table places would be made for the newcomers, and a part of interest fell to their share in all the trivial concerns that made up the life, apart from the leaven of work, of the sojourners of Chevillon's inn. Nor less enjoyable was the walk homeward through the stilled fields, for the bevy of insects that give night a voice with us, is not usual in France. Nor do they have the firefly zigzagging through the shadows, an airy image of our restless activity; but in its place the fainter phosphorescence of the glowworm gleams persistently upon the borders of the hedge-rows.

Young peasant girls in play often arrange these in a circle on their heads, and I remember, on our way home from Grez one evening, meeting one such, a slim, pretty creature, advancing through the gloom crowned by a coronet dimly bright.

One evening, arriving thus at Grez, when the company was already seated, we took our places near Bob, quite at the end of the table. Looking toward the opposite end, I was surprised to see two new faces—the faces of women. In answer to my query as to

their identity, Bob informed me that they were my compatriots, Californians, art students, and friends of one of the men with whom my own acquaintance was slight. They were mother and daughter, I was told, though in appearance more like sisters; the elder, slight, with delicately moulded features and vivid eyes gleaming from under a mass of dark hair; the younger of more robust type, in the first precocious bloom of womanhood. I was gratefully conscious that my own infraction of the unwritten law, that had held woman apart from our circle, had been quickly pardoned, but I was equally conscious that our continued welcome therein was due to the possession on our part of a certain amount of tact—a quality, as my friend Bob had informed the insufferable cad at Barbizon, more necessary in such a society than in one more formal in its customs.

Questioning Bob, on this delicate subject, I was at once assured that the newcomers were "of the right sort"; that they had quietly taken their places and shared the life led around them with easy toleration; joining in some of its activities and avoiding others in very sensible fashion.

It seems curious to me to-day to think how little during the remainder of the summer was my acquaintance with these ladies, for, as wife and stepdaughter, they were to become so closely identified with the life of Louis Stevenson; the one by the tie of which he wrote: "As I look back, I think my marriage was the best move I ever made in my life," and the other, as faithful amanuensis, taking down his last message to the world. Louis was absent from Grez at the time, and none of us present at the table that night could

know what the future held in store; and so it was, in after years, under our roof in Paris, that we were to meet more intimately and cement a friendship which has outlasted the life of the husband and friend around whom our affection centred.

At the time it was natural enough, as Mrs. Low then ignored my native language. Consequently, the conversation, when she was present, was carried on in the idiom of France, and at the other end of the table English was in use for the same reason, as it was in that alone that the ladies there were fluent.

As I have said, Louis was not at Grez for some little time after the advent of the woman for whom he was to dare so much, to receive in turn such entire devotion, and to leave in prose and verse, as in his uttered words to all his intimates, a tribute such as few women have been privileged to receive.

He had been absent for some little time on a visit home that summer, for I think that his biographer, Graham Balfour, is mistaken in placing the meeting between Stevenson and his future wife at the time: "when Stevenson and Sir Walter Simpson, the 'Arethusa' and the 'Cigarette,' returned from the Inland Voyage to their quarters at Grez."

He was with us at Montigny in the spring and early in the summer, but in the "Letters" (pp. 132–133, Vol. I) I find letters dated from Swanston Cottage, Lothianburn, in July. This coincides with my recollection, for about this time I was called to Paris by the necessities of my work. I had a picture under way for which I needed a model unprocurable at Montigny, and for a month I was at work in the city.

It was during this period that I remember Louis coming to Paris, and I recall his start of surprise and alarm as, among the events that had transpired during his absence from Grez, I reported the invasion of the theretofore Eve-less Paradise.

I gave him what comfort I could, based on the information I had received from Bob, aided by my own observation of the general air of contentment that appeared to reign on the border of the river Loing; and assured him that he would find life there but little changed. All this seemed to avail but little to lighten the comic apprehension of the professed woman-hater. "It's the beginning of the end," he averred—little knowing how truly, nor in what sense of the truth, he spoke.

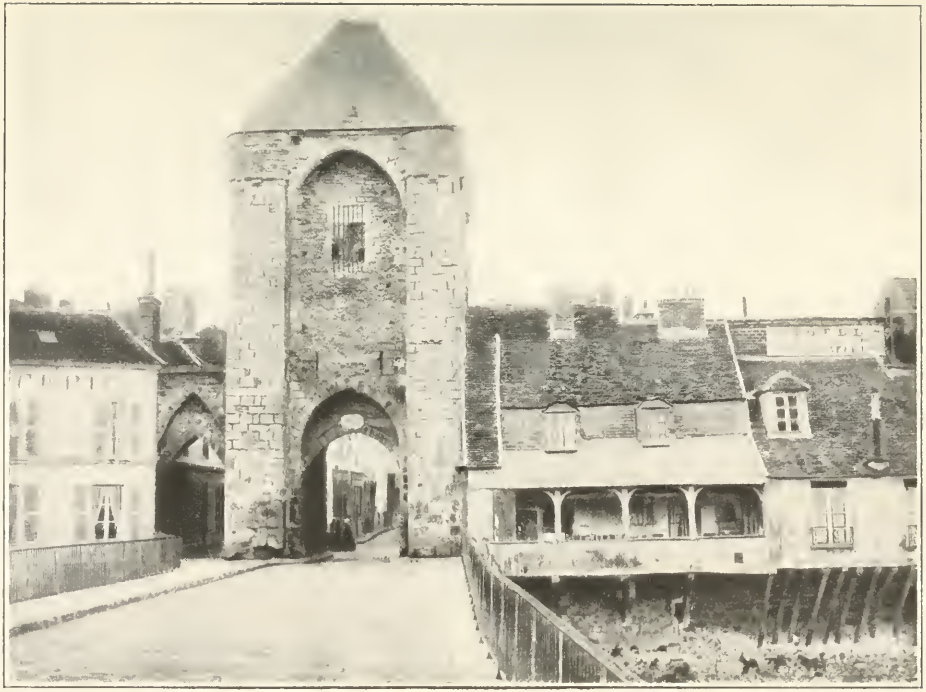
Of the events of the next few weeks I was not a witness, but on my return to the little house at Montigny, and on my subsequent visits to Grez, an inkling of the state of affairs, in so far as my friend was concerned, dawned on me. Soon after Louis and Walter Simpson departed on the Inland Voyage, in early autumn, the house at Montigny was closed, and on our return to Paris, when later in the season Louis appeared, his daily pilgrimages from our quarter to the heights of Montmartre told the story clearly, and for male companionship Bob and I were left alone.

As has been made manifest throughout this recital, project—compared with accomplishment—occupied a disproportionate place in the activities of our circle. So paradoxical, indeed, were the conditions under which we lived, that it seems almost logical that the most absurd of these projects should have come the

nearest to realization. Its full history can never be written, since its master projectors are all gone; but here and there in Stevenson's writings there are slight references to the scheme, and as its birth took place in the leafy arbour of our garden at Montigny, I may add my quota to its important history.

The conversation had turned upon what I may call fixed charges. Bob held that a gentleman, possessed of the requisite coin, could eat his dinner in comfort because the hour of payment was close at hand; but that many other periods of settlement, for value received, were so remote that it was but natural that one, with a brain occupied with other and more important matters, should forget these recurring periods, dispose of his substance otherwise, and find himself at the end without what "you Americans call 'stamps,'" to pay his just debts. He accepted the correction that the system of long credits had worked beneficently in the case of innkeepers in the country; but, in contrast, cited the Paris landlord, who was deplorably deficient in the virtues that had so endeared the Sirons and the Chevillons to our little band.

The remedy, however, he continued, he had evolved, after giving the subject much thought, and, like many other solutions of knotty problems, it was extremely simple. "In the first place, the requirements of a decent habitation called for water near at hand. The land was overcrowded, and the acquisition of realty and the subsequent bricks and mortar were not only expensive operations, but, if accomplished, and your house paid for, you would always be tied down to one place like a mere banker."



"Under the walls of an ancient town"

The city gate and the inn at the bridge end, Moret

On the other hand, the waterways were free, and a slight charge of demurrage, when you wished to stay for a period in one place, would hardly count. Barges were often owned by canal-boatmen, a class that was notoriously as impecunious as artists and writers; and, consequently, a barge, conveniently fitted up as a place of residence, would be well within the means of these last. Thus, in the fruitful brain of Bob, the project had conception and, by his prolific elaboration of details, the embryonic idea grew until it looked to us all as though it might live. No one, for that matter, could be more industrious than my friend, when it came to the patient building up of something probable upon the airy foundation of the impossible.

I remember an even more ingenious scheme for avoiding the fogs of London, of which he wrote in later years: "We live wrapt in Cimmerian gloom. Fogs as dense as gruel hang above the city. Painting is impossible. Gas goes all day. All rational pursuits are interdicted and alcoholic intoxication is the sole recreation suitable to this condition of things." The simple solution of this problem was to be found in an artistic colony, living and pursuing its avocations in captive balloons, high above the strata of fog!

The barge project was more seriously studied, and, even in the face of failure, it has its possibilities which I generously pass on to the present generation of dreamers.

Maps were consulted and canal and river routes over the greater part of Europe were laid out; the cost of wharfage in Paris and various cities was learned, and the charges for towing barges were inquired into.

Visits to various shipyards and centres of construction were made, and figures tabulated, that were so mendaciously encouraging that the avoidance of this superior manner of residence, by the majority of mankind, was difficult to understand. We were all intensely interested, I, who had absolutely no available capital, no less than the others. These calculations occupied Bob during the summer at Grez, but after the return of Louis and Simpson from the "Inland Voyage," their practical study of the subject along the canals they had traversed was pressed into service.

Simpson, who had not only the most practical mind, but was the only one at all liberally supplied with money, suggested the formation of a limited partnership, each member contributing an equal amount for the purchase and fitting up of a suitable barge.

The winter passed with the project still in our minds, but it was not until the summer of 1877 that the barge was purchased; one that was almost, if not entirely, new, never having served to carry coal or other cargo that would render its hold difficult to transform into habitable living quarters. Of the manner of its purchase I remember little, having two excellent reasons for non-participation in any transaction of that nature, the first of which was my inability to bear my share of the expense. The project of having a fairly large company who would live on the barge at intervals, dividing their time of occupation, had been voted down, and the eventual ownership was vested in four persons: Bob, Louis, Simpson, and Enfield. My second reason for remaining outside of the society was that it was essentially an enterprise for the unmarried; but, while in

substance this was held to be sufficient to excuse a continued stay, my friends one and all insisted that as it was to be their permanent home, a guest room was a primal necessity. Moreover, it was proposed that the guest room should harbour married couples of good repute and congenial nature; and, to ensure my association with the enterprise, this room, to be known as the "bridal chamber," should be decorated by my hand.

It was even decided that the work which I should thus execute, was to be taken in lieu of a material contribution to purchase my membership in the association.

"Pink cupids rolling around on pink clouds and that sort of ruck, the Boucher or Fragonard game," was Bob's cheerful suggestion; while Louis opined in favour of nothing less than a modern version of the "Voyage to Cythera" by Watteau.

The capacious hold of the barge was to be roofed over, partially with glass, the whole made sufficiently low to pass under the bridges along the canals, and to be in sections, so that it could be taken down and awnings substituted in fine weather. Rooms were to be built at either end—four in number; the existing cabin at the stern was to be used as the "bridal chamber"—"flower-pots in the stern windows," suggested one, "and a canary in a cage," added another, thinking perhaps of his visit to the barge on the Sambre and Oise canal. A large room was to be left in the centre to serve as studio and lounging room, "with lockers—plenty of lockers to store things." Trips were projected: "the South in winter, working up gradually to

Paris for the opening of the Salon"; perhaps they could moor alongside the Cours la Reine in the rear of the Palais de l'Industrie?

Thus the dream acquired, or seemed to acquire, substance, each added detail making it appear more and more plausible. A steam launch, the gasoline variety was not then invented, was considered as a future acquisition. "Think of the economy of towing," urged the arch-dreamer—until even now, as I recall these half-forgotten elements of the carefully elaborated scheme, it seems more than half plausible.

The barge in truth became a reality. It was taken to Moret, a river town near Grez, and work actually began on the changes by which it was to emerge from its humble condition as a goods-carrier to a more glorified state; when it would be freighted with youth, ambition, ideal friendship and genius—or at least with some of the kindest hearts, if not the wisest heads, in Europe.

But it was not to be; "pink cupids on pink clouds," or their more serious prototypes, were already busy with some of us, and the realities of life were closing in on us all. The projected "old age on the canals of Europe," when "we should be seen pottering on the deck in all the dignity of years, our white beards falling into our laps," affords no clue to the after experience of the puppets, who were thus allowed their merry May-day dance in company; only to be torn apart—each dangling at the end of his separate string—by the hand of destiny.

It was a number of years after that I learned the end of the story I have essayed to piece together, as it

is told in the dedication to the "Inland Voyage." This dedication, to the address of Sir Walter Grindlay Simpson, Bart., is, for some reason unknown to me, not printed in the definitive editions—the Edinburgh and the Thistle—of Stevenson's works, though it is one of the most charming of his felicitous epistles to his friends. Therefore the conclusion of the episode can be told in better words than mine.

"That, sir, was not a fortunate day when we projected the possession of a canal barge; it was not a fortunate day when we shared our day-dream with the most hopeful of day-dreamers. For a while, indeed, the world looked smilingly. The barge was procured and christened and, as *The Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne*, lay for some months the admired of all admirers, in a pleasant river and under the walls of an ancient town. M. Mattras, the accomplished carpenter of Moret, had made her a centre of emulous labour, and you will not have forgotten the amount of sweet champagne consumed in the inn at the bridge end, to give zeal to the workmen and speed to the work. On the financial aspect I would not willingly dwell. *The Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne* rotted in the stream where she was beautified. She felt not the impulse of the breeze; she was never harnessed to the patient track-horse. And when at length she was sold by the indignant carpenter of Moret, there were sold along with her the *Arethusa* and the *Cigarette*, she of cedar, she, as we knew so keenly on a portage, of solid-hearted English oak. Now these historic vessels fly the tricolour and are known by new and alien names."

XVI

"YOUTH NOW FLEES ON FEATHERED FOOT"

THE autumn of '76 saw the end of the constant companionship, the daily meetings, and the material identity of life of our little circle. I was, and should have been, the last to complain, for in some way I had set the example, and found compensation in a closer tie for all the brave joys that the friendships of youth afford. Louis in his journeys to and from a strange quarter, for it is curious what a *terra incognita* Montmartre was to us dwellers on Mont Parnasse in those days, was, however, the most conspicuous delinquent. Not that there was anything changed in our spirits on the rarer occasions when we came together, but Bob and I both recognized how serious a passion held him, all impossible of realization as it then appeared to be; and whatever sympathy we could express was only mutely shown, in respectful recognition of that greatest problem in life which a man must solve for and by himself.

There were still cakes and ale on these rarer occasions, and one such incident may be told here, typical in its sequel of that gift of the fitting word, that was constantly evident in the talk and even in the most carelessly written letters of Louis Stevenson.

We were dining with him at the Café of the Musée de Cluny, then one of the famous restaurants of the *rive*

gauche on the Boulevard St. Michel, and it amused Louis to describe to the young wife an apocryphal incident in her husband's career.

It happened, *selon* R. L. S., that we were dining together in some restaurant famous for its cellar, and, though the greatest care had been taken to select the very best wine on the card, and though Stevenson professed that his simpler taste had been amply satisfied, yet his critical companion insisted that, lurking somewhere in the cellar, there must be a bottle of rarer vintage. To settle the question the head-waiter was called and, at the very first words of the inquiry he paled and said, with visible perturbation: "Gentlemen, this is a question that cannot be decided by me —I must call the proprietor."

When this worthy appeared, he first gave a searching glance to decide whether the two *convives* were worthy of the supreme effort that was demanded, and then, after a brief consultation with the head-waiter, he said, with a sigh, "The gentleman has divined our secret; if he will be pleased to wait a moment, his commands shall be obeyed." After a period, a procession appeared, headed by the *sommelier*, carrying a bottle on a velvet cushion, followed by the proprietor and the whole staff of the restaurant, including the cooks and all the waiters. Here Stevenson gave a most minute description of the *sommelier*, or cellarman, describing a venerable person bent with age, with beard reaching to his knees, cobwebs in his hair, and with eyes blinking in the unaccustomed light, for he had lived many, many, years underground. The description of the venerable bottle was no less minute, a painstaking,

intricate bit of still life, such as a Dutch master would have delighted to paint.

The *personnel* of the restaurant ranged themselves around the two friends; but, before opening the priceless bottle, the proprietor made one more appeal, asking, with emotion, if we felt ourselves really worthy to partake of this glorious vintage? To this the victim of this fairy-tale was said to have replied, "with that fatuous proud look of his," that *that* went without saying. *Bien*, assented the cowed proprietor and, with infinite precaution, the wine was opened and two slender-stemmed glasses were filled.

The solemn moment when the wine first touched our lips—for, hardened epicures as we were, even we were moved—was then described with consummate art, conveyed with easy spontaneity in my friend's precise, measured, but perfectly idiomatic French.

"As a smile of satisfaction replaced the critical frown on your husband's countenance," he concluded, "a long-drawn sigh of relief went up from the restaurant force—a prolonged Ah-h! like that of the crowd when the first rocket illuminates the upturned faces at a fireworks show."

Thus the rough draft of my friend's spontaneous invention, as he told it, with mock seriousness and appropriate gesture, over a bottle of less precious vintage than that which he described, one evening in the winter of '76–77, for the temporary amusement of his guest.

Ten years later, in the summer of '86, again at dinner, but this time in our little house in the rue Vernier in Paris, where Stevenson and his wife were staying with

us, Mrs. Low asked him if he remembered the story that he had "made up" to amuse her. "Made up!" exclaimed Stevenson, "it was Gospel truth"; and then and there, to both of our memories recalling the slightest incidental detail, apparently without the change of a word, the tale was retold. We listened intently, his feminine hearer absolutely entranced till at its conclusion, until then keeping close to the text, he added after the long-drawn Ah-h—, "the *sommelier* dropped dead." The words were hardly uttered before he caught on my wife's face the shadow of surprise at this divergence, and as instantly replied to her unspoken objection, "that last about the *sommelier* isn't true; the rest is Gospel!"

Here was the survival of the child who entertained himself with pirate stories in bed; the stickler for accuracy in later life, looking up from his writing to another child, who, tired of playing Crusoe on his island within the limits of a sofa, slid to the ground, and started to walk away. "For Heaven's sake, at least *swim*," remonstrated the imaginative-realist.

Rifts in the cloud—even comfortable little dinners like this—were of rare occurrence, for I was fighting a losing fight in my endeavour to impress callous-hearted picture dealers with the merit of my works and to establish myself as a self-supporting artist. I was down on my luck, as the phrase goes, and the sympathetic Louis, to conjure the evil sort, presented me with a luck-penny, a curious Oriental coin which he had found on the floor of the Parliament hall in Edinburgh—the Advocates walk which he had intermittently frequented. This seemed to have an influence so contrary to that

desired that, some weeks later, I returned it to him, filled with a superstitious horror at its pernicious activity.*

It was only a few days later that Louis brought Walter Simpson to my studio, and he, blushing red with a most awkward assumption of a new-awakened interest in art, insisted on purchasing a picture for the generous price of five hundred francs. I, on my part, was equally ashamed to profit by what I knew was the double generosity of my friends: Louis' in having drawn his attention to my desperate state, and Simpson's in making what I imagine was his first, if not the only, acquisition of the kind. It was some slight consolation to reflect later, that the picture was one that my master had pronounced to be the best that I had painted, and to hope that my friend had received the worth of his money.

I have no desire, however, to linger over the seamy side of my personal experiences; for hard-luck stories of artistic life in Paris I may refer my readers to "Manette Salomon" or "L'Œuvre," works by MM. de Goncourt and Zola, to Master François Villon, sometime student in Paris, or to the unpublished "Memoirs of an Art Student in the Twenty-second Century"—if Paris holds its own as the centre of art. The experiences are very much the same; they are undoubtedly beneficial in forming the character of the participants—but they are, above all, good to leave behind one.

However much misfortune weighed upon me at the

* Yet later he wrote (December 26, 1885): "I remember the day when I found a twenty-franc piece under my fetish. Have you that fetish still? and has it brought you luck?" "Letters," Vol. I, p. 442.

Daisies—Montigny-sur-Loing, 1876

From the painting by Will H. Low, in the possession of the late Sir Walter Simpson, Bart.

CNX AND
ATIONS.

time, I must have kept a modicum of courage, for the question of what I should paint for the coming Salon quite overweighed the more frequent doubt as to the provenance of the next day's dinner.

The Salon question was solved in a way that has left none but pleasant memories.

In my boyhood in Albany I had slightly known a young lady of Canadian birth, whose name, Emma La Jeunesse, was synonymous with her age, whose voice and whose dramatic talent had in the intervening years gained her celebrity upon the operatic stage, where, under the name of Albani (in pretty compliment that has shed illustration on my native town) she had become famous. One day, in a friend's studio, I picked up a newspaper, and learned that she was to sing that winter in Paris. The article, by the eminent critic Castagnary, spoke of the singer in the highest terms, enumerated her successes, and prophesied even greater triumphs for the coming winter. I told my friend of my early acquaintance, and he at once suggested that I should endeavour to renew it—"and there, if she would consent to sit for her portrait, you would have an excellent subject for the Salon."

This project I, in my obscurity, scouted, but as photographs of the *diva* began to be shown in his shops, they bred a painter-like enthusiasm for a possible subject; while some element of kindness in the expression of her face led me to desire a renewal of acquaintance at least.

Soon after Albani sang for the first time at the Italiens, and the next day all Paris rang with her praises, her success being critically considered superior to that of Patti.

It took a certain measure of courage to venture to recall myself to the memory of a *prima donna* in the full flush of her triumph, when, as I knew, so many more important people than I would seek to attract her attention.

The ante-chamber and reception room at her hotel, where I eventually sought her, were not calculated to encourage my advances, as they were filled to overflowing with floral tributes and encumbered with a brilliant assemblage of people, from the midst of whom the singer advanced holding my card, on which I had written a few words, in her hand, and, with the simplest grace imaginable, at once made me welcome. After a moment's converse, she begged me to stay until "we could talk over old times in Albany."

This I did, and the crowd thinning a little, I found her—as she remained throughout our pleasant relationship—a charming, simple woman, absolutely unspoiled by her success on the stage and the many marks of distinction which, as I learned later, she had received in her private character from the Queen of England and other only less distinguished personages. So emboldened was I, in fact, by the extreme kindness of my reception, that, without further hesitation, I asked the privilege of painting her portrait for the Salon, to which, with a pretty reluctance, she graciously consented. It was at once arranged that I was to see her in a variety of the characters she represented on the stage, to choose the costume in which to portray her, and the very next day, through her kindness, I received a season ticket for an orchestra-stall at the Italiens.

There then began a dual existence, in which a dull

enough chrysalis in my modest studio by day, I became at night a brilliant butterfly disporting gayly among my fellow-butterflies in the *foyer* of the Theatre des Italiens, or arrested in flight, in my orchestra-stall listening entranced—for Albani sang like an angel—to the melodious sorrows of Lucia, Gilda, or Amina. Fortunately my evening dress was irreproachable, nay more, for I doubt if its many successors have ever approached its sartorial perfection. It was made by an artist, one of the first workmen of Dusautoy, then the principal tailor of Paris, whose portal neither I nor any of my student kind would have ventured to cross in the guise of a client. It was the exercise of one of the small economies, by which the fortunately initiated in Paris are sometimes privileged to profit, that had sent this workman to me, with a proposition to put his skill at my service, by working on holidays and at times when he was not employed by his patron, and at a price within the means of a student's purse.

My costume was therefore a work of art, though I greatly fear that its buttons marked "*Dusautoy, fournisseur de S. M. l'Empereur,*" were filched by my journeyman from his employer; and it was perhaps well that it was so, for I was buoyed up by the consciousness that, in appearance at least, I was fairly prosperous. When one frequents the Opera, habitually, in its highest-priced seats, and at the same time has a certain difficulty in obtaining the six sous necessary for the modest omnibus to convey him to the halls of song, and even more to procure the fifty centimes that was the nightly tribute exacted by the old woman who opened the door leading to my seat—the

ouvreuse of execrated memory—one is indeed fortunate to possess well-cut and carefully preserved evening wear.

Meanwhile my portrait, in the costume of "Lucia di Lammermoor," progressed. If my reader will fancy the many calls upon the leisure moments of a successful *prima donna*, in the full height of the musical season in a city like Paris, he will form some idea of the good nature of Mlle. Albani, in thus crossing the city to my remote quarter, and with unfailing patience lending herself to the production of a portrait, the very acceptance of which by the Salon jury—on this point I had been quite frank—was problematical.

The kindness was unfailing; the sittings, governed, perforce, by the professional engagements of the singer, were as frequent as she could make them; and even when, as once, in my intentness on my work, I permitted the fire to go out, and my sitter contracted a cold that very nearly occasioned the closing of the opera house for a time, my only punishment was the unfailing regularity with which I would receive a telegram the mornings before the subsequent sittings, admonishing me to care for the little circular stove, which was the primitive form of heating my studio.

The report of my undertaking spread among the students, and more than once the *diva*, as I escorted her across the courtyard on the way to her carriage, encountered the admiring glances of some of my fellows waiting in her path; honest admiration, which finally culminated one evening on the stage, in the presentation of an album of original sketches, in which

Portrait of Emma Albani—rôle of Lucia, Salon of 1877

From the painting by Will H. Low, in the possession of the Albany Club, Albany, N. Y.

every American artist or student in Paris at that time had considered it an honour to be represented.

Some of my friends occasionally accompanied me to the Opera, and I remember that Louis particularly fell under the spell of Albani's voice, and the charm with which she represented Lucia; though his Scottish spirit rebelled at the Gallic misrepresentation of the customs of his country by the male chorus, every "man-jack of them" wearing in his bonnet, as he pointed out, the cock-feather which denotes the chief of a clan!

Time after time my patient sitter came, with each return adding to the burden of gratitude which I am yet proud to bear, until at last—all too soon for me and for the merit of my work—the impatient carrier came and bore away the portrait. Fortunately, it found favour in the judgment of the jury, and figured in the Salon of 1877 with another work of mine—the plain of Barbizon, *le jour des Morts*—All-Souls' Day—now in the art gallery of Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

This Salon has for other reasons remained memorable with me, as it was there that I saw, for the first time, a statue which no modern sculptor has equalled as a work that embodies the finest essence of the spirit of Renaissance sculpture, grafted upon an almost Greek perfection of workmanship. The works of sculpture are sent to the Salon for judgment by the jury some time in advance of the painting. This is necessitated on account of the greater difficulty of arranging the collection in the sculpture gallery; and, as the majority of the works are in plaster, there are

frequently minor breakages which require to be repaired before the Salon is opened. Consequently the sculptor-contributors are admitted to the galleries for the purpose of repairing such damage a month before the painters, whose fate is hanging in the balance, can know whether their cherished works are placed or not.

For several years I had profited by my intimacy with my group of sculptor friends to get this preliminary glimpse of the Salon, a partial view only, as the doors of the picture galleries were jealously guarded and none could penetrate there.

But from my earliest youth in Albany, where my first glimpse of art was in the studio of the late E. D. Palmer, the most notable of the group of early American sculptors, through my later friendship for Olin L. Warner in New York, to whom was due the intimate relations with the little group of sculptors in Paris, my interest in sculpture has always been vital; in fact, I hold that no greater injury has ever been inflicted on art than the specialization to any one of its phases that has gradually enfeebled the practitioner of art since the days when the artist was painter, sculptor, and architect, each and all in turn.

Therefore, when the Salon doors were to open to my sculptor friends, I joined them, clad in a plaster-bespattered blouse, carrying a small bag of plaster and a few tools and, in this disguise as one of their assistants, was smuggled past the guardians at the gate. Once within the spacious glass-roofed garden with its snow-white population—the first impression of such a scene is one of suddenly arrested life, of suspended animation—our first concern before any damage was

investigated or repair made, was to see the sculpture of the year. The circuit was slowly made, our group mingled with others like it, passing before each principal work, and loud admiration or equally vehement denunciation found voice, while the ball of criticism was tossed to and fro with at least as much energy as address.

Finally, Gaudez observing sagely that meritorious work was often hidden in the darker corners, we left the central portion of the garden, and followed the long lines of groups and figures placed within the shadow of the projecting balcony which ran around the enclosure. There was a double line of sculpture which thus encircled the central portion of the garden, the works placed at its outer limit being close against the walls, and rendered doubly inconspicuous from their position and from the penumbra in which they could alone be seen and studied.

Here in one of the darkest corners of the "Morgue," as this section was pleasantly entitled, we were arrested by the view of a single figure of a man, nude, exceedingly simple in movement and without accessories of any kind. After a moment's inspection murmurs of admiration rose, and these trained sculptors soon realized that they were in the presence of a masterpiece.

But whose work was it? For with the interest of men engaged in a common pursuit, they would have insisted that they knew the style and the name of any one capable of work like this. But though the name of the sculptor—Rodin—was soon discovered graven on the plinth of the statue, none of the group—there

were perhaps twenty present—knew the man or his work. At last Gaudez, *toujours*, came to the rescue: "I have it," he cried, "and I even know him a little; he is a fellow who works as an assistant for Carrier-Belleuse; he had a very remarkable bust, a man with a broken nose, in the Salon a few years ago." Carrier-Belleuse was a well-known sculptor of the time, whose works, filled with a facile grace—veritable "*articles de Paris*"—were the very antithesis of the work we stood before.

After discussing the work for some time, with increasing enthusiasm studying it from every point of view as well as could be done—for the figure was so close against the wall that the superb back, with its relaxed muscles and its sense of latent energy, was lost—voices rose in protest against the injustice of its placing. Then ensued a riotous scene, the guardians were sought, and remonstrance was loud; the head-guardian finally came, but these authorities were for a time obdurate: Rodin's figure had been placed where it was by the order of the Committee charged with the arrangement of the sculpture, and there it would stay. At last, every one talking at once, the diplomatic Gaudez passed his arm through that of the chief-guardian and drew him aside. We watched them walking around various figures placed in well-lighted and better positions, until the chief-guardian, finally gained to our cause by I know not what arguments of my irresistible friend, the order was given to displace another figure, thus judged by our extemporary jury to be of minor importance, and to give Rodin an admirable position in the centre of the garden. The

sequel is part of the recorded history of art; the Salon opened and a critical war waged around "The Man of the Age of Bronze." How it could have been suspected for a moment that this noble work was made up of casts from nature—even if this largely conceived and chastened form could be found in any living model —is difficult to conceive. This charge was, however, promptly brought, and as quickly disproved; and from the attacks and the defence, which, to the credit of Paris, carried the day, Rodin came forth triumphantly, an acknowledged master.

With much of the sculptor's later development the present writer owns himself less in sympathy, but his admiration has grown rather than lessened in the elapsing years for the "Age of Bronze"; and it was interesting to learn from a friend, who shares his appreciation, and who, seated by the side of the sculptor at a dinner in Paris not long ago, expressed it warmly, that Rodin answered, "I am pleased that you like the 'Age of Bronze'; perhaps it is my best work; I even doubt if I could do it to-day."

XVII

FINI DE RIRE!

THE privileges of a mild participant, of even a mere spectator of the artistic activities of Paris, were measurably great, it appeared in those days, but man cannot live by these alone. Stubborn though one may be, determined to consider art exclusively, the butcher and the baker, to say nothing of the landlord, have convincing arguments to the contrary of this view of life that one must pause to consider.

Therefore, when the spring of 1877 was well advanced, one of the actors in this narrative bethought himself that, as he had been able to wrest from his embryonic art a fairly decent living in New York when in his 'teens, he surely, by returning there after five years' study in Paris, might be able to earn something more nearly approaching regularity of sustenance and shelter than Paris seemed disposed to grant.

It was the beginning of the end; our little circle was breaking apart. Bob had made a short stay at Cernay-la-Ville, carrying Louis with him, and then had returned, like an uneasy spirit, to Barbizon and later to Grez. Louis meanwhile returned to Paris and set up his tent on Montmartre. Enfield was at Rouen directing the building of a small sloop yacht with a center-board, then an almost unknown feature among European boat-builders. Other comrades, with the addition of many new arrivals, were settled for the summer at

Anthony Henley, a painter, brother of the poet | Bentz | Palizzi | R. A. M. Stevenson | Frank O'Meara | Ernest Parton | Willie Simpson, brother of Sir Walter

A Group in the Garden of Chevillon's Inn at Grez, 1877

Grez, whence Bob, on occasional visits to Paris, brought news. There were wars and rumours of wars. O'Meara had "taken a grouch" for somebody or something, and during a long afternoon, while Bob had walked him over the fields, had reiterated his intention to slay somebody at the dinner-table that evening; his chosen weapon being a bottle of pale ale, which, fortunately, he otherwise disposed of, after the mollifying influence of a long walk and the pacificatory eloquence of our friend. But, according to Bob, the place was changed; there were too many people there; and though, in that and the following year, some of our friends sojourned at Grez for a time, it was finally abandoned by its "discoverers"; after which it had a brief popularity, until a magazine article effectually spoiled it by bringing hordes of "tourists"—the usual signal for the departure of the artists; and since then the pretty village has resumed its somnolent existence.

Louis was still a frequent visitor at "eighty-one," where I had retained my studio, and he at this time was making an excursion into journalism for a short-lived publication entitled "London." I can see him now, his lank form comfortably distributed between two chairs, industriously writing an article on—of all things in the world—the Paris Bourse!

Another welcome visitor about this time was Henry Enfield, who blew in from Rouen one day, declared that I was "off-colour—decidedly seedy," a statement with which my wife agreed, and bore me down the Seine to Rouen, for the trial voyage of the *Gannet*, as he had christened his recently constructed yacht.

Enfield in his fine robustness was a tonic influence to one who was, probably more than he was willing to acknowledge, run down from a long-continued strain, and, though the sturdy mariner would have resented the imputation of kindly solicitude, no tired mortal ever had a more kindly and solicitous nurse. We constituted the entire crew, he and I, sleeping in the half-decked cock-pit which sheltered our heads and shoulders, with a rubber poncho-blanket stretched over the rest of our bodies, and seldom going ashore, except when my ministrations as cook drove us to some riverside inn, in order, as my captain expressed it, "that we might get something fit to eat." Sailing the tortuous reaches of the Seine from Rouen to Caudebec, anchoring where it pleased us with a view to sketches, though our works of art were not numerous, we passed a pleasant fortnight, with much rain that in nowise dampened our spirits.

Not even my cookery, conducted in the open air, on a charcoal stove, perched on the deck over the cock-pit, nor my original invention of washing cups and kitchen utensils by tying strings to their handles and letting them drift as we sailed, seemed to affect the cheerful spirits of the master-mariner, who, wherever he may be, I could wish to read this, and harken to some echo of our memorable cruise. He would perhaps remember the tipsy patriot, from whom we escaped at the inn at Duclair, who procured a boat and rowed out to where, anchored in the river, we were sleeping, to continue the development of his political views. Twice was his painter unloosed, twice was he set adrift, before he would take a hint; and then, his

humour changing, as the placid current carried him away, the silent river echoed back: "*Sales Anglais, espèces de Prussiens!*" Even our failure to penetrate the inner circle of the nobility and gentry of the land through which we sailed might still awake a semblance of regret?

It came about in this manner. We were ashore at Jumiéges, the chronicler engaged in painting, his less industrious companion stretched upon the sward at his side. Throughout the morning we had heard the baying of hounds, and knew that a hunt was in progress in the forest of Tancarville, which crowned the heights on the opposite shore. Suddenly the attention of one of us was attracted to a dark object midway in the stream—the Seine is here of considerable breadth—which appeared and vanished in turn, for all the world like some one swimming the river. After watching this floating object a moment, Enfield ran to the bank where our yawl was moored, summoning a peasant boy near at hand to accompany him, and rowed away. From my station I watched the boat arrive in the middle of the river, and saw it stop, when there ensued a struggle of some kind, difficult to make out from a distance.

When the boat returned, it carried a strongly protesting passenger in the shape of a young deer, which had escaped from the hounds and was swimming for its life. What could we do? Our sympathy was all for the "poor little beggar," who, bleating pitifully, lay hobbled by the boat's painter in the bottom of the yawl. On the other hand, not only are the laws of France strict, and the case that was before us amply

provided for, but the exiguous accommodations of our cock-pit forbade carrying away our capture. "An uncommonly lively cruise it would be with that beast for a cabin-boy," opined the skipper. At last we decided upon a plan, and placing the deer in the custody of one of the peasants, who had a home near by, with strict injunctions to care for its safety, we indited a note in our prettiest French to "*Monsieur le Marquis de* ———, *a son château de Tancarville*," explaining the affair, and saying that we held the prisoner at his disposition. Early the following morning a lackey, gorgeous in green and gold, came with a note, thanking us profusely, begging that we would turn over our capture to the bearer of the note, and in terms of the greatest courtesy, inviting us to dine *sans cérémonie* at the château that evening.

We probably looked like tramps in our boating rig, and I fancy that, from the first, the gorgeous creature in green and gold had looked askance at us; but, when we led him up the bank to the house where our capture was held, to be met by a chorus of lamentations that in the night the deer had slipped his hobble and had escaped, his scornful expression told us but too plainly that he suspected that, in collusion with the peasants, we were counting on venison for dinner.

Nothing remained but to write another note of explanation, and to decline M. le Marquis' polite invitation for that evening; and so, strangely saddened by the whole occurrence, we raised our anchor and sailed down the river.

Whether this "meets the eye" of the Captain or not, the cook of the *Gannet* retains the liveliest memories of

Enfield at the tiller

the cruise, not the least of which is of the friend who, "without any nonsense about it," found a fellow down on his luck and helped put him, mentally and physically, back upon his feet again.

Returning to Paris, much clearer-headed than before this outing, the veracious chronicler proceeded to set such order as he could to his affairs, with a view of seeking an environment in his home-land more appreciative of his merits than he could command abroad.

How little we ever know what fate has in store for us! Here was a youth who had become, as may be gathered from the preceding pages, strangely alien to his native country and to his early associations, whose active life seemed centred in a foreign land, and whose dearest friends by a cruel decree—which he as openly resented as he blindly obeyed it—were to be separated from him by three thousand miles of ocean for a long period—perhaps for ever.

Here I must somewhat qualify this sweeping statement, so true it is that conflicting elements are constantly at work within us. For a time, one who is sincerely enamoured of his vocation, can so consecrate his every waking thought to his art that he almost ceases to be a human being; and this, of course, without any relation to the merit of his production as a justification for his virtual withdrawal from all kindly commerce with his fellow beings. Here in these pages are principally enregistered the events of our playtime; but, in the period of time covered, there were months, and weeks, and hours, not touched upon here; some gladdened by hope and illuminated by small technical successes, and as many more saddened by despair and

darkened by failure; but all consecrated to the jealous divinity of art to the exclusion of all else. Between this obsession, which, according to our various temperaments, we all felt in greater or less degree, and the clamant call of our daily material surroundings, I fancy that there was a third influence shaping our lives; whose tentacles reached back to the source of our being; and from our cradles forward to the child in a strange land at work or play, in good or ill—the subject of a father's ponderings or a mother's prayers.

We seldom touched upon such subjects, I never, save with Louis in one or two well-remembered talks; but now that the die was cast and the resolve to return home taken, there was a certain denationalized, Gallicized youth in Paris who, somewhat to his surprise, was quite frankly and simply homesick.

Home, however, meant for him a small and restricted family circle in an inland town, from whence he knew that he would soon be obliged to wing his flight in the quest for the Almighty Dollar, beloved, as he believed, of his compatriots and desirable—in a dazzling perspective—to his own uses. The larger patriotism, the love for his native country, was in no considerable degree a factor in this sudden wave of nostalgia; for the art atmosphere of New York he remembered, as St. Patrick may have remembered the snakes in Ireland; and thus torn by conflicting emotions—fate knocked at his door!

The wise proscription that we must not speak of the living, leaves many blanks in this record, the names of good men and good women who have been my friends; but, as I have sought to weld together the

loose links of the chain that leads backward to my student days, one name was in later time so closely linked to that of Louis Stevenson, that I was determined to break this rule in his case. I had foreseen and rehearsed the arguments by which I would overcome his essential modesty; would wrest his permission to treat him, in the eminence which he had attained, as a public character concerning whose personality a genuine and legitimate interest was permissible—within certain bounds—which he might trust me not to transgress.

All these precautions, are useless now that "the noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched" (in the words which Louis might well have written of our friend, words so often applied to and typical of himself), "when trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit" has shot "into the spiritual land." It was Augustus Saint-Gaudens to whom I opened my door that summer morning, and who, with that straightforward simplicity that he retained through life, greeted me.

"Your name is Low, is it not? You had a bully picture in the Academy of Design last spring, and I wanted to come and tell you so. My name is Saint-Gaudens." "Come in," I replied, "*I know you very well.*"

And so in fact I did. From the earliest days of my arrival in Paris, often when the question of the talent of any of the younger sculptors came up among my French friends, the remark would be made: "So-and-So is very well, but do you know, or do you remember, Saint-Gaudens?"

The curious reputation of the ability of a man in his student-days, the place which among the younger painters John Sargent so rapidly acquired, and which, later, Saint-Gauden's brilliant pupil MacMonnies inherited in a large degree, had been awarded Saint-Gaudens in the *atelier Jouffroy*, where he had studied, and the appreciation of his talent had been handed down as a tradition of the schools.

I had heard of it, before I left New York, from Warner, and once, when with him, in the old Knoedler Gallery, then at 22d Street and Fifth Avenue, he had left my side to greet another visitor; and then, calling me over, had introduced the stranger by the name which I at once recognized as that of the crack-student of whom Warner had so often spoken; a meeting which I afterward learned had passed from Saint-Gaudens' memory.

But it was not many hours before we knew each other well. His long absence from Paris, his residence in Rome, and his sojourn in New York, whence he was newly arrived, bearing a commission to model the statue of Farragut, had little changed him; and we might have been students of our respective *ateliers* meeting for the first time, and establishing that almost instantaneous footing of intimacy which between kindred spirits was not unusual in those days.

And soon—not at once, but gradually unfolding before my mental vision, as my new friend in the days that followed described incidents and conditions in the art life of that strange city of the New World, whence he came and where I was to go—a new outlook on life was presented to me.

Vividly presented, for in a manner unlike any I have known, Saint-Gaudens had a gift of making one "see things." He, in all simplicity, believed himself to be virtually inarticulate; and for any personal exercise of the spoken or written word he, quite honestly, professed much the same aversion as he, the skilled artist, would feel for the bungling attempt of the ignorant amateur.

But it was precisely because he was so intensely an artist that his mental vision was clear, and that which he saw he in turn made visible—there is no other word —to others. How, it is hardly possible to describe, but I have heard many others who by common consent would be accounted better talkers than he, endeavour to repeat some story or incident originally told by Saint-Gaudens, and the contrast was painful between the vivid, full-coloured image of the one and the pallid copy of the other.

At the time of our meeting he was filled with interest in the revolutionary movement in art that was then gathering weight in New York.

It is ancient history now, the story of the six or eight young Americans who, without preconcert, had sent home pictures, the first-fruit of their study abroad, to the spring exhibition of the National Academy in 1877. Their reception from the Academicians of those days, who, lulled to ease in their handsome Venetian palace, had to some degree ceased to put forth the continuous effort that alone ensures the well-being of art, was discouraging; while the press, unaccustomed to the bolder efforts of the newcomers, was equally ungracious.

This evidence of a probably hostile reception at home was not calculated to cheer a returning pilgrim, as my picture, "Reverie—in the Time of the First Empire," which had gained me his friendship, was counted among the offenders; but Saint-Gaudens brought other news of a more comforting nature.

He told of a circle of younger artists, with whom he had been intimately connected, and who, in company with some of the more liberal spirits in the Academy, had formed a new Society to hold exhibitions, where art upon the ideal basis of "Art for art's sake," was to find expression. It was still in the first stage of formation when he had left New York, but he held out to the home-goer the prospect of finding kindred spirits who would welcome him to their ranks, and drew a cheering horoscope of the future, which had the result of creating a hope that, as a worker in such a cause, a larger and more useful field of endeavour lay before his hearer than he could ever hope for as an alien in a strange land.

The shackles of independent, unrelated effort were weakened, and the virtually selfish desire of the artist to perfect his own production, and leave the general advancement of art to take care of itself, appeared for the first time in less alluring colours than they were wont to wear, and gradually the conclusion forced itself upon me that, in whatever measure I could be of use, the activities of art in our New World held compensation in some degree for the superior civilization by which I had lived surrounded.

Fini de rire, yes, laughter and many delights were to be put by; but there was work to do, and I knew that

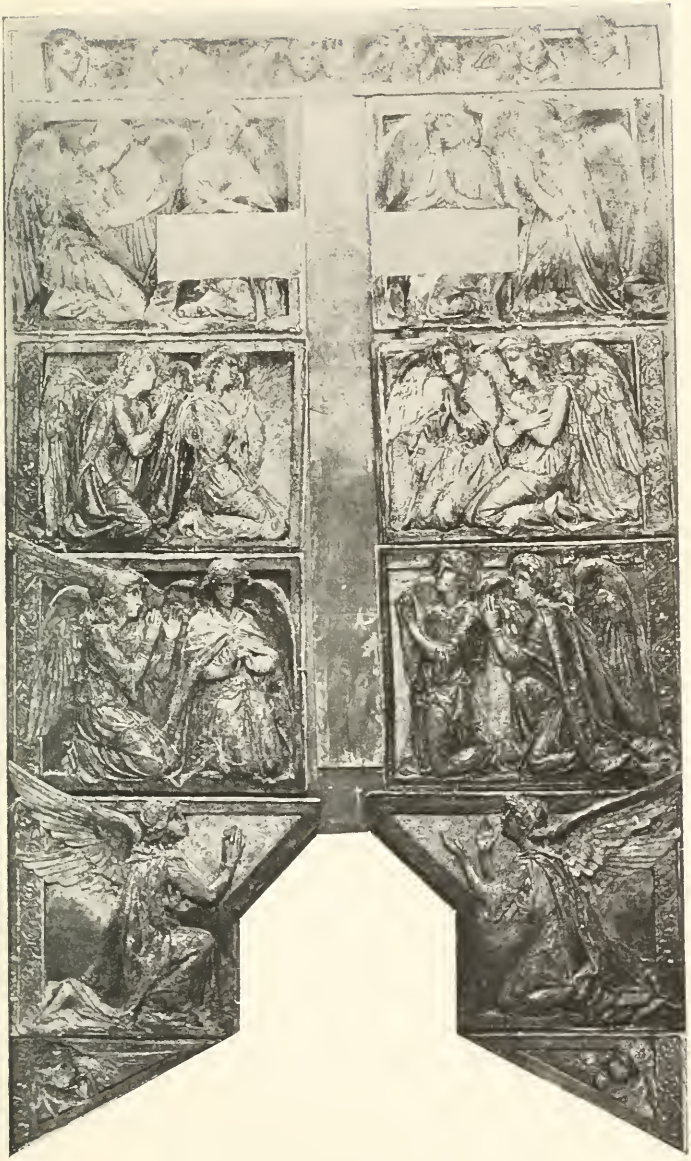
in some of it I should be allowed to assist—probably counting on doing it better than the event has proved—and so I prepared to enter into a new world, a new phase of life.

XVIII

A NEW FRIEND AND HIS WORK

FORTUNATELY for me, the return home was to be delayed for three months, for in that interval I saw much of Saint-Gaudens. The lease of my studio at "eighty-one" lapsed soon after our first meeting and, not to renew it even for a short period, my new friend invited me to share the large studio which he had taken in the Faubourg St. Honoré, and live in the little apartment on the Boulevard Pereire, where he had set up housekeeping. In this daily contact it may be imagined that our intimacy progressed rapidly, and I soon knew his whole life-history, narrated during the progress of our work in the studio, with the picturesque presentation of which he was master.

I saw the little New York boy who lived down-town in Varick or Lispenard Street, in a part of the city which was already "old-fashioned" in the later days of the Civil War. I shared his delights in following, as fast as small legs could carry him, the exciting progress of the "Masheen," on its way to a fire, pulled by the heroes of the Volunteer Fire Department; for like glories had been mine in my inland town in my own day of "short pants." Escapades on the docks, and the thousand and one adventures of the public schoolboy, of which he had a fund of recollections, followed. Born in Dublin, of mixed French and Irish



Reredos by Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Modelled in Paris, 1877, for St. Thomas's Church (recently destroyed by fire), New York City. Photographed from the original models as placed on the studio wall in Paris.

parentage, Saint-Gaudens was not only American, but he was one of the very few genuine New Yorkers that I have ever found; for, like Paris, which proudly shows, in niches along the façade of its Hotel de Ville, the statues of one hundred and ten noted Parisians, of whom only a small proportion were born within its walls, many are called to New York, but few are in fact the children of the city.

Through his apprenticeship to a cameo-cutter, less an artist than an artisan; the development of his talent through working at night in Cooper Union, and in the school of the Academy of Design; through the awakening of his ambition which finally landed him in the *atelier Jouffroy* in Paris, his recital went on bit by bit. Of course, this was quite without autobiographical intention, but I was anxious to learn all that I could of New York, for, despite my two years' experience there, the city seemed exceedingly remote in the nearer memories of my five years in Paris. Interchange of confidences carried my friend along to tell me of his student life in Paris, where, meagrely supported by his cameo-cutting, his hardships had been such that I found my experiences were as nothing in comparison. An early commission had taken him to Rome, where he had executed what he called "the necessary mistake of every American sculptor—the figure of an Indian." This, a statue of "Hiawatha," was the only nude figure that he ever finished, with the exception of the "Diana," which soars so proudly over Stanford White's beautiful Sevillian tower on Madison Square. Another statue, of "Silence," he modelled about this time, or a little later, in Rome; and years after, swearing me to

secrecy, he took me where it stood in the Masonic Temple, in a semi-public position here in New York. I should keep the secret even now, but many of my readers will have seen it, before these lines are printed, in the Memorial Exhibition of the works of Saint-Gaudens, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and will have found it to be a more than creditable work, which, in common with the "Hiawatha," the sensitive sculptor persistently undervalued, for the comparison which he made, with later and more mature work, was eminently unjust. In *badinage*, the "Silence" was dubbed the "dark secret," and the threat of its disclosure was enough to excite very real distress on the part of the sculptor, whose self-criticism of his production grew with his years.

I watched with interest the first work which I saw him undertake, the first measure of his talent that I could form, for he had arrived in Paris almost empty-handed, so far as his previous efforts were concerned; some small portrait medallions being the only examples of his art which he had brought.

This first work was, to my delight, decorative in character, and was to be placed as a reredos, between two large canvases, by John La Farge, in the chancel of St. Thomas' Church in New York. The reredos consisted of a composition of angels kneeling, symmetrically disposed two by two in panels one above the other, around a cross extending from the top to the bottom of the united and superimposed panels. It was to be cast in cement, and to overcome the contrast of its whiteness in juxtaposition with the painted decorations which flanked it on either side, Saint-

Gaudens proposed to gild it, and then tone it down to harmonize with La Farge's work.

To this I proffered the objection "that it would look like a sham bronze," and suggested that a treatment of the surface in polychrome, avoiding any naturalistic tinting of the flesh or draperies, but giving the whole a vari-coloured, subdued tone, would be better. Saint-Gaudens at once adopted my suggestion, and asked me to treat the surfaces of his bas-reliefs in colour as I proposed; thus affording me my first opportunity to put into practice the decorative theories of which, in an instinctive and vague fashion, I had long enjoyed a monopoly among my comrades, all more interested in realistic work than I.

I admired from the first the easy competence of my friend for the task before him. The figures in the relief were of life size, and their attitudes were similar as they all knelt in adoration of the cross. Without a preliminary sketch, not using a living model, I watched the bevy of angels grow; and, by a turn of the head here, a variation of the attitude there, by differing dispositions of the hands or the folds of the drapery, sufficient variety was obtained to break the rigidity of a voluntarily formal composition.

Destined to be seen in a subdued light, strong accents were left, and little subtlety of form was attempted; but, as I saw the clay become vitalized under the deft touch of the sculptor, I realized that the tradition of the school concerning his talent reposed on a firm foundation, and that he possessed his *metier*, as I knew very few, even of my French comrades, possessed theirs, although this quality was more common in the

French sculpture of that period than with any other nation or at almost any previous epoch of art.

I insist upon the facility of Saint-Gaudens' work at that time, as well as upon the extreme rapidity of his execution of this reredos, because later in his career, when in the tide of production of the great works, by which his name will be preserved, he became the fable of the studios and the despair of the committees, who were forced to wait months and years while the fastidious sculptor apparently hesitated, changed his purpose, tore down all but completed work, and, but for the complete success with which he emerged from this cloud of indecision, appeared to retain but little of the direct method of his earlier work. But it is to be remembered that he was then comparatively fresh from school, where technical qualities are alone considered important; that the reredos was, with all its charm of sentiment, merely an enlarged sketch of decorative intent; and that few of the graver problems of his nobler work were present before him as, with a fine facility, these angelic figures fairly sprang into existence.

The type of the figures thus evolved possessed a strange charm; an early evocation of one which in his later work became thoroughly his own; and which, with differing expression and variety of character, can be traced in the Victory preceding the grim general on his march to the sea; in Death hovering over the boy-warrior at the head of his negro soldiers; or in the enigmatic figure that guards the tomb in Washington.

In these later evocations the Celt can be discerned (I have seen a drawing which the son made of his

Irish mother in which something of this wistful beauty of expression was latent), though an element of resourceful serenity, a confident outlook upon life, also present in this composite type, I would fain claim for America.

And so these figures grew—one for each day's work. The sculptor meanwhile chatted gayly, first in French, then in English, with idiomatic command of the slang of either language; with graver intervals when he told of the projects of the little band at home and the purposes of the new Society. He had much to say, also, of the painter whose works were to form the major part of the decoration in which his *bas-relief* was to figure, to which I listened intently, for before I had left New York, a single visit to the studio of this painter and the few works which I had seen by him elsewhere, had given him a high place in my appreciation. He told me of the decoration of Trinity Church in Boston, under the control of this master, aided by a number of the men I knew or had heard of, among them Saint-Gaudens himself, for the time being turning painter; and as he told the story it sounded like some tale of Renaissance times taken from the pages of Cellini or Vasari.

More and more as I listened I grew to feel that my careless prophecy to Bob Stevenson in the garden at Montigny might perchance have an element of truth and become realized in my native land; though I could not—would hardly have dared—foresee far enough into the future, to know that I should pass a year side by side and under the influence of the man of whom we spoke, and whose mastery we acknowledged.

When the various panels of the *bas-relief* were finished in the clay and cast in cement, they were placed on the wall at the end of the studio, arranged in the order they were to be seen in the chancel, and my part of the task began. Gradually the chalky white of the cement gave way to a more sombre richness of hue, and high on my ladder, with Saint-Gaudens at the other end of the studio directing me to darken an accent in one place or lighten a plane in another, I tasted for the first time the sweets of working upon a generous scale, and of harmonizing masses of colour to form a rich pattern over a great surface.

One evening, when the colouring was finished to our satisfaction, we made a visit to several neighbouring grocery-shops and purchased a large part of their stock of candles in order to try the effect of the artificial light, under which the work was to be seen in the chancel of St. Thomas' Church. The candles were set up in lumps and strips of clay, as temporary holders, and then lighted. We opened the big studio doors looking out on the passage way to the street, in order to judge the work from a distance; and the soft illumination of the candles—there were more than a hundred—was extremely satisfactory to the two decorators.

This illumination naturally created a certain interest among the rare passers-by, one of whom, an old woman, promptly dropped to her knees and uttered a prayer. Saint-Gaudens asked her, when she rose, if she liked the work—he welcomed then, and after, the *naïve* criticisms of the ignorant—and she exclaimed: "*Mon Dieu! comme c'est beau*, It is like Heaven!"

Saint-Gaudens was occasionally absent from the studio, of course, and it so happened that on three or four occasions I was visited by either Bob or Louis Stevenson when he was away, so that he never met Bob, and ten years were to elapse before he and Louis were to become friends. During this period of sharing his studio I managed to finish a number of small pictures, some of them begun at Montigny the previous year, and remarkably enough, as it seemed at the time, and largely through the effort of my friend, I disposed of these to various residents of the American quarter—compatriots whose society I had shunned in my contentment with Gallic surroundings in a manner which, as one frequentation need not have precluded the other, my frank friend characterized truly as "simply idiotic." These sales enabled me to clear up some slight past indebtedness, and to quit Paris more care-free than I otherwise could have done, while adding to my provision for the home journey on a scale of comparative comfort.

Mention of these sales brings to mind the encounter with one who, surely, must have been the meanest man on earth, though the episode is in no way connected with the time of these fortunate commercial transactions, having happened in the early spring before meeting Saint-Gaudens, and before my trip down the Seine, a period which I look back upon as one of utter despair.

Some months previously I had painted a little picture: four or five figures, among them a girl coming out of church on the arm of an old woman, a young lover eyeing her shyly, and a rather pretty background of a

picturesque old church at Arbonne near Fontainebleau. The figures were in mediæval costume, partly from imagination, partly painted from the lay-figure, and a little from nature—all rather carefully finished and, as it seemed to me, a real picture-dealer's picture. Carolus-Duran had liked it, and on my telling him that Goupil, Sedelmeyer, and other dealers refused to consider it, he said that he thought that by taking it to his studio he could surely dispose of it for me, perhaps to some one of my rich compatriots, who were among his most numerous sitters. "What do you ask for it?" he inquired, and, on my telling him one hundred and fifty francs, he exclaimed that it was not enough, and that he should demand double the price that I placed upon it.

The picture was sent to his studio, where it remained some time, I hearing nothing of it meanwhile. At last one day, when the wolf was snarling a little more audibly than usual outside my door, I went to my master and reclaimed the picture. He was very kind and said that he regretted to have been unable to find a purchaser for it.

Knowing it to be useless to seek the larger dealers, the picture was taken to a dealer in bric-à-brac and various odds and ends, in some street in the Hotel Druout quarter, who, after consulting his Salon catalogues to make sure that my claim to have exhibited was founded on truth, finally purchased it for the magnificent sum of twenty francs.

One receives a buffet like this with whatever philosophy one possesses; twenty francs loomed large in my exchequer in those days; they had their immediate

uses, and the incident was all but forgotten when, one day in company with some of my comrades, exchanging, probably, as we often had occasion to do, hard-luck stories, I related the history detailed above.

Some of my friends must have been so indiscreet as to repeat the story and mention my name, for about a week after a knock came at my door, and I opened it to welcome a most unusual visitor; unusual in the prim immaculateness of his attire, gloved and shod with equal propriety, and exhaling a veritable odour of prosperity. He gave me his name, which I have gladly forgotten, claimed to be an American, and said that he had heard of me and greatly desired to see my work.

I had several pictures to show, works calculated, in their intention, to please and all at prices, when his admiration took that welcome form of appreciation, that were extremely modest. He blithely ran the gamut of compliment, seemed only to hesitate which of these delightful works he most desired to possess, and then, without any transition of manner or change in his high-bred intonation, he said: "By the way, I heard the other day a most interesting story about a picture which you sold for twenty francs, and it occurred to me that I would come and get the address of that dealer, so that by offering him perhaps the double I could—" I heard no more, but fairly sprang for my door, threw it open, and ordered him out, with words which, since I am not the Recording Angel, I will not put down here. As unruffled as when he entered, only deprecatingly referring to my shocking language and unmannerly behaviour, he left; and I sat down, rudely

shaken, to a gradual realization that I had met the meanest man in the world.

Like Charles the Second, I was long in relinquishing my hold upon life—the life of Paris—but at last the moment came. I had one more long and very serious talk with Louis Stevenson, seated on a bench in the Parc Monceau. None of our many confidences have left so strong an impress, save one other, where, on a star-lit beach, we walked and talked shortly before he was to leave the quiet countryside by the sea, where we had spent a happy month, to cross the continent and take ship for the South Seas. This farewell over, one night Saint-Gaudens accompanied me to the Gare St. Lazare, and there we said good-by to each other, and I left Paris the richer for a newly gained friend. I was bound for Normandy, to pass a fortnight with my wife's people, and then from Havre to regain my native land.

Thus it was that, at the approach of the Christmas holidays, I once more trod the soil of my country and came home to my father's house.

Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Sketch from life, 1877

XIX

THE RETURN OF THE ARGONAUT

IT was to a New York where all above Twenty-third Street was still "up-town" that I returned to find many of my old associates housed in the same quarter as where I had left them. In other respects I had the common experience of one who returns after a long absence.

New relations, the natural progress in directions abandoned by the absent one, and the insistent duties of the day, in which I shared no part, preoccupied my earlier friends. After a hearty welcome, somewhat boisterous, as though to prove its sincerity, a certain number of questions asked and answered, the conversation languished and, when the newly returned went his way in quest of another "old friend," the visited resumed his daily and accustomed task, while the visitor took up the round of renewing old ties with a puzzled sense of change, of which he was reluctant to accept his part of responsibility.

Other conditions accentuated the sense of being extraneous to the life on Manhattan; and in this I was not alone, for this time saw the return of a number of young painters from their studies abroad; argonauts bearing what they fondly conceived to be the golden fleece, ravished from the old art of Europe, to find that it was esteemed to be only dross by the self-sufficient inhabitants of our Island.

One of the newly returned, cynical in his humour, said about this time: "Yes, we return from Europe, undecided whether we'll go back to Paris for the rest of our life, or stay here and build a studio big enough for our work; and then, after a little, we're blamed glad to make drawings for some magazine at thirty dollars per drawing."

This paints rather accurately the state of mind—and the finances—of the "younger men," as the press and the Academy dubbed these home-comers; a title by which they were complaisantly known during all the twenty-seven years of the duration of the Society of American Artists, which they founded.

Fortunately, they had all, more or less, as a birthright, the resourceful spirit of their country, and where they found their compatriots reluctant to encourage the form of art which their training perhaps best fitted them to do, they have modified their production, not so much in the research of popularity as in obedience to the common law of demand and supply. Under these conditions, most of the men of that time have earned their living, some of them have achieved a wide-spread reputation as artists, and a few of them have produced works that reflect glory upon their native land.

I found Wyatt Eaton, who had returned to New York the previous year, already well established. He had arrived at a propitious moment, when the Woman's Art School of Cooper Union lacked an instructor, and had been given the position. With his faculty of liking people, and making them like him, he had also assembled in his private studio a large class of girl pupils,

and these two sources of revenue, combined with an occasional portrait which came his way, produced an income, which, as I naturally and at once multiplied it into francs, seemed prodigious; especially as I had not as yet learned the comparative cost of living between New York and Paris.

Under his guidance, for he was the most serviceable of friends, I was taken to the art editor of a magazine, that had rather scorned my services in my earlier career in New York, and a manuscript was confided to me for illustration, at a price at which my Paris friends would have marvelled; though their wonder would have been modified by learning the rent of the modest studio which I now leased.

The commercial aspects of my craft were, very properly, present to my mind as I faced a new life under new conditions; but if more blessed by fortune it had been otherwise, there were, outside of a very limited circle, mostly composed of artists, very few that I met in my new environment whose thoughts appeared to have other than a commercial preoccupation.

The young artist returning from his studies abroad to-day finds more sympathetic conditions awaiting him, for interest in our art has grown with its progress since the time of which I write. If we still lack the full recognition of art as a factor of life, which has grown through centuries of effort in the Old World, the present affords some recompense to the generation that has worked for these better conditions, and the future smiles encouragingly upon the aspirants to come.

Perhaps some vision of this future was even then apparent to four young artists who met, on the evening

of the first of June, 1877, at 103 East Fifteenth Street, in the City of New York.

They were Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Wyatt Eaton, Walter Shirlaw, and Helena de Kay Gilder, of whom Mr. Shirlaw—I quote from the minutes of the Society—was "unanimously" selected as Chairman, and later was made its first President. "Mr. Saint-Gaudens made the following motion: *Resolved:* That an association be formed by those present with the object of advancing the interests of Art in America; the same to be entitled The American Art Association."

Two or three more meetings were held, at which the new organization, soon adopting the name of the Society of American Artists in place of the title first chosen, increased its membership by the inclusion of certain members of the Academy and of some of the younger artists resident in the city or recently returned from their studies. This carried the organization over to the following year, when, on the evening of January 28, 1878, Eaton asked me to be present at a meeting of the new Society.

The meetings at that time were held in that pleasant house which, deserted by its former occupants, still hides behind a recently constructed bank building, its front still ornamented with two medallions by Saint-Gaudens. It was approached through iron railings, which separated it from the street, along a flag-paved way bordered on one side by a garden where, as the poet sang, "The barber took care of the flowers." It had originally been a carriage house, the large room where we have spent so many pleasant evenings, owed its dimensions to this previous occupancy, and had

been altered into a dwelling for the uses of a young couple. Of these, the wife was one of the four who had met the previous June and, though she has abandoned the practice of her art for a social sphere, in which her talents find equal employment, she was at that time an active member of the Society. The husband was hardly less interested and influential in those earlier days. I fancy that the minutes of the meetings, in the pages yellowed by age, are in his handwriting; for later I find a vote of thanks tendered him for his "efficient services."

The meeting had been called to order when I entered with Eaton, but the proceedings were suspended to greet the newcomer from Paris. I found several old friends, both of my Paris and my earlier New York days, present, and was made known to others who I count as my friends to-day.

So informal were the customs of the new Society, that, when the proceedings were resumed, no one appeared to mark the presence of a non-member until he, though woefully ignorant of parliamentary procedure, called the attention of the meeting to the fact.

There was a moment's pause, and then, with much heartiness, some one proposed my election. It seemed but proper that I should retire during the ballot, and so the hostess conducted me to an upper room, apologizing for leaving me in the dark and cautioning me to keep quiet, lest I should arouse an infant sleeping in the cradle. As I knew the drastic rule—that membership at that time was only bestowed by an unanimous vote of the fourteen members of the Society—I thought it prudent to inquire whisperingly of my hostess, if

there were means of egress from the house, without traversing the room where the meeting was held, in case the verdict should not be favourable to me. She showed me such an issue, at the same time kindly reassuring me that I would not need to use it, and left me fairly holding my breath, between my mingled anxiety as to the result of the vote and the fear that I might wake the sleeping babe and consequently interrupt the proceedings of the deliberative assembly downstairs.

In a very few minutes Eaton came to give me the welcome news that I was the fifteenth elected member of the Society of American Artists, an honour which, conferred in this unpretentious manner, I considered then, and have never faltered in the conviction, as great as any that may have befallen me.

The first exhibition of the S. A. A., as we soon learned to abbreviate its name, was held a few months later, and for that, and for the few subsequent exhibitions, the material questions of meeting our expenses were only solved with the greatest difficulty. Most of the members had little money or credit beyond their urgent needs, yet what little they had they pledged, in order to give their city a series of exhibitions of a merit theretofore unknown—as the critical press soon acknowledged—but in which the public took but a languid interest. This was indeed true to the end, for I doubt if the Society ever realized from attendance at any of its twenty-seven consecutive exhibitions a sum equal to the outlay of assembling and exhibiting the works of art there shown. To meet these expenses, dues of ten dollars per annum were exacted, and in the

early days, when, after a particularly disastrous exhibition—financially speaking—an assessment in addition to these dues was levied, it nearly ruined more than one self-sacrificing member of the Society. For these dues no privileges of exemption from judgment were accorded to members, who submitted their works to the jury on the same terms as artists outside their ranks. This feature, which differed from the practice of every other art organization in the world, may be said to be the best and most distinctive reason for the Society's existence, and for its continued beneficial action throughout its career. To this was soon added a jury composed of so large a number that every shade of opinion in matters artistic may be said to have been represented, while their numerical strength effectually prevented any one of these various phases of art from receiving more than its due meed of favour among the works received.

Without adopting either of these two distinctive features, the National Academy of Design was in no wise laggard in meeting the friendly competition of the younger Society, by showing an increased catholicity of choice in the works shown in their exhibitions, and after a time by the admission of the "younger men" into their ranks as Associates or Academicians.

To abridge what would be, if it found place here, the history of American Art in the past thirty years, it may be said that what the press continuously termed the "quarrel of the artists" was quickly healed, and for many years the two institutions went their way side by side, if not hand in hand. By continuous elec-

tions of members chosen from the "younger element," the older institution became virtually uniform with the Society. Many of the men, who thus became members of both associations, some of them among the earliest and continuously enthusiastic adherents of the Society, have seen, for ten years past, the immense advantage that would accrue to our art if all its practitioners could be enrolled under one banner, and the great public could be made to understand how essentially united in the desire to promote its interests for their benefit were the entire body of artists. Finally, after much desultory agreement of a general nature, lasting over a number of years, special action was instituted, and it was quickly found that a definite understanding could be reached.

The National Academy of Design and the Society of American Artists were thus merged; the older organization retaining its name, which has been held honourable for more than eighty years, and the younger, its work done and well done, losing its identity, but bestowing its two essential features: the jury composed of thirty members and, virtually, the submission of members' contributions of works to its exhibitions to this jury upon the same terms as all other works offered. A more active participation in the work of the Academy, on the part of the Associates, in conjunction with the Academicians, was also a part of this agreement under which our art may show an united front and march progressively to a larger usefulness.

Again, by thus resuming the action of a later period, I find myself far from the New York of 1878, to which

I would return for a moment's stay in the little house in Fifteenth Street, where so many of us found an oasis in the first few years after the return to our desert home; as it appeared in comparison with the more flowering regions of art whence we came.

To the hospitable welcome of this modest dwelling, every one who came to New York in those days, bearing a passport of intellectual worth, appeared to find his way.

How many, who to-day are dispersed to the four corners of our city, and who see each other rarely—though, it is but fair to say, when these rare meetings occur, this early association still adds warmth to the greeting—how many more, birds of passage, are scattered to the four corners of the globe—carrying with them a pleasant memory of evenings in this company—and all too many are flown on the four winds of Heaven—where may Paradise be clement to them!

On summer evenings, the great doors, which had been retained from the carriage house, would be opened and, sheltered from the street, chairs would be brought to the courtyard, where pleasant talk and equally pleasant listening would chase away the cares of the day. Here we would have Modjeska, then making her first efforts in our rebellious tongue, but voluble in French, with the charm that those who knew her Rosalind so well remember. How vividly comes back an evening when Walt Whitman conversed in his Manhattanese with the Polish actress, she at each moment turning to one of us for a word in English, or, with peals of laughter, confessing her inability to follow "the good gray poet."

Quite different was her meeting there with Remenji, the violinist. They had not met for a number of years, and the interval had seen the rise and failure of the Polish agricultural colony in California with which the generous woman had cast her lot. Remenji's comical regret that he had not been able to see her when engaged in the strange occupation of rearing little pigs, "*Ah non! non! non! les petits cochons, c'est trop fort,*" quite convulsed the whole assembly.

The recollections of this refuge of those early days might readily become a mere record of names, some of them famous, but all borne by men and women whom it was a privilege to meet; a privilege that was the greater because, for a long period, the sense of having lost touch with one's native land persisted.

For this, at this late day, I can place the larger part of the responsibility upon the home-comer, who, at first, failed to perceive the definite trend of the new conditions confronting him. At last by voluntary effort on his part, aided by some kindly magic of the powers at work in the making of our "Little Old-New York," the veil was lifted, and a glad volunteer was added to the army, enlisted to erect at the sea-gate of our country the foundations of a newer, more progressive citadel of light than the world has yet seen.

Enrolled for this task, which the future still holds before us, the prospect grew, and little by little, step by step, treading the old familiar road, which in every country of the world the artist finds under his feet, a convinced optimist, an atom of these concentrated forces, took his way, cheered by the lines first heard

under the roof in Fifteenth Street, where they had their birth:

> Following the sun: Westward the march of power;
> The Rose of Might blooms in our new-world mart;
> But see, just bursting forth from bud to flower,
> A late slow growth, the fairer Rose of Art.

Richard W. Hidden

XX

EXPERIENCES AND MEMORIES OF HOME

NO feature of our life at that time was more pleasant than the welcome given to our ruthless, iconoclastic band by certain men among our seniors. Several of these hailed the foundation of the Society of American Artists as the advent of a new day. George Fuller—who, before the birth of most of us, had relinquished his art, beaten, baffled, and unappreciated at the time, and had taken to farming, only to return to his first love at the dawning of a better day—came to us like some Rip Van Winkle of the arts newly awakened. He was in spirit among the youngest of the members of the new Society, coming from Boston to its earlier meetings, simply and frankly happy to find that his art, groping and elusive as it was at times, seeking expression through technical methods alien to those to which we adhered, found warm admiration in our appreciation, and was allotted honourable place in our exhibitions. Homer Martin also brought his subtle art to the strengthening of our effort, and the charm of his witty and illuminating personality to our meetings. He had sat almost alone for many years in that little sky-lit studio that some of us remember in the old studio building on Tenth Street, working out the problems of his art for and by himself so successfully that, in his chosen field of landscape, we have not yet known among American painters one whose

gift was rarer or more personal. I was fortunate in having acquaintance with Martin from my earliest childhood, as we were both born in the old city of Albany, the subject of an oft-quoted jest of the late George H. Boughton, who passed his earlier years there also: that "many artists came from Albany, and that there was no better place to come from." In my earlier experience in New York I had therefore been privileged to frequent Martin's studio and, as the least conspicuous of the small number of those who gave him courage to work out his own salvation in his own way, I consistently brought him the tribute of my instinctive, if ignorant, admiration.

Upon my return from abroad his was almost the first studio that I visited, and I was delighted beyond measure to find that my memory of his work suffered no shock, but that, on the contrary, my admiration had grown with my better understanding. High appreciation for his work was felt among all the adherents of the new Society and, though no man was less fitted by nature for executive duty of any kind, he bravely did his share in all the volunteer service that our new organization demanded.

His pleasant and thoroughly American form of wit always lent gayety to these occasions. It rose superior to his life-long struggle with chronic impecuniosity, for, though this condition was chiefly due to the total lack of commercial value placed upon his work at that time, poverty seems too harsh a word to apply to his gallant toleration of the hardship of his lot. One typical example of this humour dates from the occasion of my first visit to him after my return. I told him

that I was in search of a studio, and asked if he knew of one vacant in the Tenth Street hive, where, an intermittently industrious bee, he laboured. None was vacant, it appeared, but he added gravely, though with a twinkle of his eye: "If you're not in too great a hurry, I'd wait a while; it's so long since I've paid my rent that perhaps you might get this one of mine."

With much the same appearance of seriousness I have heard him dispatch the mystified head-waiter of a club, where he was greatly beloved, to present his compliments to the *chef* and inquire if the kidneys with which he had been served were "made under the Goodyear patent." Tradition also has it that on one occasion while visiting Whistler, during the days when the latter lived in temporary splendour, he all but disconcerted his imperturbable host, who was below receiving his guests for a formal dinner, by a bland inquiry from the vantage ground of an upper story, "Jimmy, where do you keep the scissors you trim your cuffs with?"

This cheerful humour had no trace of conscious wit, though it could be used to repel an attack with great effectiveness, as when on one occasion Martin had served on the Hanging Committee of one of our early exhibitions, and had consented to the insistence of the other members that two of his own pictures should be placed in good positions on the line, though in no especial prominence. On varnishing day he was approached by one of the exhibitors, angry that one of his two contributions had been placed on the second line. "See here, Martin," exclaimed the grieved one, "one of my pictures is 'skied.' Why is that?" "Oh,

that's all right, we thought it should be there," explained Martin. "Oh, you did, but you have *two* on the line." "Oh, that's all right, too, we thought they *both* should be there," repeated Martin with an accent of finality that silenced his interlocutor.

Repeated instances of his ready wit were often quoted during his life-time, and then belied, as now these citations may serve to falsify, the true measure of the man, who always in his work, as often in conversation, showed the keenest appreciation of the finer shades of thought and feeling; his baffling humour meanwhile keeping inviolate the secret haunt of this deeper sensibility free from the intrusion of the unregenerate.

Not the least service which the Society was privileged to give in the earlier days of its activity, was such honour as it could pay to artists who, like Homer Martin, were then unrecognized here at home; whose work appealed to the judgment of its members as fulfilling the requirements of the higher standard of art it sought to establish. It was but a barren honour in Martin's case, for it was to be many years, and not until darkness had clouded the eyes that had seen such visions of beauty, before a ray of general appreciation tempered the gloom in which his life went out.

Since then, with the cruel fortune that so often lingers until too late, his work has won its place, and to-day collectors are eager to possess even minor examples of his art at prices, any one of which might have meant a year's unhampered production, could Homer Martin have come to his own in his working day. It happens

frequently that an artist's reputation among his fellows has no effect upon the market value of his production; but, to some such expression of regret that this had occurred in Martin's case, made to one of our collectors who was rejoicing over the recent acquisition of one of his works, I was met with the rejoinder: "If you and other painters knew that Homer Martin was a great artist twenty-five years ago, why didn't you get his work and *hold it for the rise?*" I wish that I could have done so—for other than financial reasons!

For another artist, quite without honour in his own country in those days, the Society drew upon its meagre funds at the time of its first exhibition in 1878, to dispatch one of its members to Baltimore for the purpose of procuring a picture by J. McNeill Whistler, probably his first exhibited work in this country; while later, in 1882, his masterpiece, the Portrait of the Artist's Mother, now in the Luxembourg gallery in Paris, was first publicly shown in New York in the Society exhibition of that year. George Fuller, A. H. Wyant, R. Swain Gifford, Eastman Johnson: so the roll of honour goes, of men who lent the authority of their presence and their work to the effort of their younger brethren in those days, and who have departed, leaving names that will be remembered in American art. Many of the younger comrades have followed after, but, fortunately, some of those who were already of established reputation at the time of which I write, are still here and active in the continuance of the work in which they were associated with the Society; and many of the "younger men"—a shade less young—are left to carry on the joint effort, which, following the traditions

of the Society under the auspices of the National Academy of Design, is still before them.

Memories of a more intimate and personal character come back from that year of my return, and surely in a chronicle of friendships place may be found for the best friends that have ever fallen to the lot of a son. Many of us, children of the North in the time of the Civil War, must have shared in the experience of growing under a mother's care, sharing her every thought, and intuitively gaining a knowledge of her character as a firm foundation for their reverting affection; while the father, absent in the South, remained a comparative stranger to the growing consciousness of the child, or was endowed by his imagination with characteristics that had but little consonance to the real nature of his elder. I fancy that there were many fathers and children, when peace finally came to the land, who met upon the footing of comparative strangers. This, at least, was the experience of the narrator, who crowded into a few short years after his return from abroad all his intimate personal relationship with his own father; who, at the outbreak of the war, being then beyond the age of active military service, had nevertheless found employment in the command of a civil transport chartered to the government, and thus acted what part he could in our great national drama. Following the war, the establishment and supervision of our governmental inspection of steamers was confided to his care, where his duties, covering a wide area, kept him away from home much of the time; until my own departure for my earlier experience in New York, followed by an absence of five years in

Europe, had completed the chain of circumstances, by which, on my return, I was to gain a new and intimate friend in the person of my own father. With my mother, on the contrary, memory begins and, independently of the deep affection of a child, I look upon her as one might look upon a figure in a well-rounded and complete story, so sweet and strong and resourceful was she throughout life, not only to her family, but to all with whom she came in contact. The daughter of Samuel Steele, one of a race of school-teachers who, in the early years of the nineteenth century, laid the foundations of our public school system, and who, surviving many years, died the dean of his faculty; Elvira Steele, *at the age of twelve*, was given entire charge of one of the schools under her father's control.

I fancy I can see the little Elvira in the winter of 1824, serene and competent, having a duty to perform and never questioning the decree that took her away from the pleasures of her age, traversing the distance of four miles that separates Waterford from Lansingburgh, on her way to school. In the country contiguous to Albany we still had "old-fashioned winters" when I was a boy, and our elders then commented on the lessening of the severity of our climate, as I hear other grizzled pates do now. Through the bleak winter the little miss of my story walked to her school in the morning and back to her home in early twilight, between snowbanks that on either side rose higher than her head. Many of her scholars were older than herself, among these one who afterward rose high in the profession of the law. The future jurist had always, indeed, a place apart in his teacher's memory, for to

him was confided the key of the school and the duty of making the fire in the morning before her arrival. And when teacher and pupil, many, many years after, met in Washington, they exchanged memories of the little school at Waterford. The very small children had for their service a large flat box filled with sand, in which they moulded letters cut from pieces of cardboard, and thus learned their alphabet; an early forerunner of our modern kindergarten system put into practice by the teacher's inventive father. This service she continued, there and at other schools, until the day before her marriage at the age of twenty-four. Samuel Steele had meanwhile taken his family to Albany, where he had been made the head of one of the newly established public schools, and there, at the age of seventeen, she met a neighbour's son, Addison Low, to whom she was betrothed for the Scriptural period of seven years for which Jacob served for Rachel. There are still in the possession of our family two old-fashioned stipple engravings of the coworkers of the "Spectator"—Addison and Steele—by which the shy boy of twenty first sought, by their presentation to the young school-mistress, suggestively to urge his suit.

The young man's history up to that time had been typical of his time. His father, coming from Vermont to Albany with a young family, had embarked an insufficient capital in a foundry, which incidentally furnished some of the cast-iron cannon balls with which our young Republic resisted invasion, and manufactured Franklin stoves, that, when they can be found by curio hunters, bearing the mark "Francis Low, Eagle

Foundry, Albany, N. Y.," I can commend for their simple and handsome design. The son, Addison, had from his earliest years shown inventive faculty and intense interest in the steam engine, but with the old-time respect for an elder's judgment, he had put aside his natural tastes and, submissively enough, was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker. Upon his twenty-first birthday, however, he respectfully announced to his father that, having attained his majority, he proposed to change his trade. In this, from the logic of his position as it was then understood, he was not opposed; and, pausing only to put his newly acquired skill into practice by making for his mother a mahogany table, massive and of good proportion, with heavily carved feet that is still a treasured family possession, and in which, for obvious reasons, I am pleased to find genuine artistic taste and skilful workmanship, he entered into a new apprenticeship in a machine-shop. Here, from the lowest to the highest grade, his progress was rapid, and he became, as the construction of many efficient and important stationary engines, notably those of the U. S. government printing offices in Washington at the time of their establishment proved, an extremely capable constructing engineer. The married life of my parents was conspicuously happy, though I imagine that few families have seen greater fluctuation of fortune or were more tried by intimate sorrow. Of ten children born to them, four only survived their childhood, and much of the knowledge which the husband had mastered was of small avail, as it was evidently accompanied by a total lack of business capacity. The traditions which his descendants have retained of the

construction works which he established seem to point to a golden age of labour, and, though many years had elapsed since the discontinuance of this branch of his activity, the younger generation saw gathered around his coffin a group of hard-handed old men, unknown to any of us, who upon inquiry proved to be former workmen, a remnant of the old "machine-shop," come to pay a last honour to "the best boss we ever had."

Through the rise and fall, or rather—it is more exactly descriptive—the uneven course of family fortune, the wife and mother kept her way, serene and competent, making the most of little, and finding something to spare in charity for those less fortunate; the father cheered and supported by her unfailing fortitude in the fits of depression which alternated with hope, not infrequently born of some phase of his inventive talent. Of these inventions, it may be said in passing, two came into quite general use; but as they were devices born on the spur of the moment and the necessities of some special construction, they were not covered by any of the many patents which he obtained. It was later in life that the varied and thorough knowledge that my father possessed became available, through the larger necessities of our growing country, and supplemented by the practical experience in navigation gained during the Civil War, fitted him for the office of Supervising Inspector of Steam Vessels, which he occupied for many years. This also brought, in the performance of official duty, opportunities for many voyages along our eastern coast, in which the wife accompanied her husband; and it was a pleasant sight to see these elderly lovers planning for or departing on

one of these "wedding journeys," as our affection styled them.

It was to this home that I returned, and here, as much as possible, with absences necessitated by my work and that of our newly founded Society, I passed my first winter.

And here I came to know a very different man from the father I had imagined. He of the firmly drawn mouth, habitually sad in expression, with clear blue eyes, often turned introspectively as he pondered some problem of mechanics; of the few words, and those not uncommonly, in the troubled state of our politics, fiercely denunciatory of those he esteemed the enemies of our country, this imaginary stern Puritan—typical founder of our liberty and upholder of our intolerance—gave place to another and truer character of man.

In his eyes, still as blue as those of a child, though he was in his seventieth year, I read a welcome to the wanderer; in his interest in my past and in his hope for my future I felt the sympathy of one whose life had made a deliberate choice, of a problematical success in the face of possible failure, rather than to follow in the path traced for him by others; and, in the happier days that had come to our land, I found his opinions, less vehemently expressed, more filled with charity for all mankind.

Perhaps also in reverting to the past I could better understand and forgive the many tiresome hours when, as a child standing on wearied feet in front of great engines, I listened to the incomprehensible jargon of technical talk between my father and some engineer—grimy, detestable persons all, they seemed to me—

Portrait sketch of my father, Addison Low, in his seventy-third year, painted April, 1883

when I reflected that in my turn I might willingly have inflicted the same leg-wearisome experience, technical jargon and all, upon him in some picture gallery, if the positions had been reversed.

Thus my emotional, imaginative, and charitable father and I became staunch comrades, and so we continued to the end. No such correction of my wilful and perverted understanding was necessary in my mother's case. I found her, as I had always known her, placid and philosophical, viewing life with sustained interest and humour; bearing the discomforts incident to old age, fortunately slight in her case, with equanimity and consistent depreciation; and as capable and competent in her household as in her earlier day. There was nothing that was pedagogic or oracular in her nature, but she had from much reading throughout life kept well abreast of her time, and her conversation was both wise and witty. One touching instance of the solicitude with which my absence had been followed, was not only shown by a fairly complete knowledge of the chief events that had occurred in France during those years, but by a familiarity with the topography of Paris which she had gained through maps and guide books; so that, in my tales of a city which she never saw, I was often surprised at her acquaintance with localities I described.

It is something more than the pride and natural affection of a son that has made me include these family portraits in this collection of pictured memories. I would be the last to deny an implicit faith in the general progression of the world and the gradual elevation of the human type; but, in the past generations

that our country has known, each period has seen certain virtues blossom and become fruitful in the garden of their time and place; and as typical of those who, in an earlier environment, lived a life of dignity and usefulness, I have tried to fix the fleeting images of this man and woman.

One word more of the mother, an oft-repeated confession of faith that all who approached her had heard her profess throughout life, but which came with more finality and significance, and the authority of her threescore years and ten; once at the conclusion of a long talk in which she had revived many memories cheerful and sad, of both of which her life experience was filled.

"So far as I can see," she said in substance, "nothing has happened in my life that has not been for the best. I would be willing to live my life over under exactly the same conditions; and though, if I could look into the future, I should dread the coming of the sorrows that I have known, as I have at the time of their occurrence, revolted, and questioned the load laid upon me, yet I would believe, as I know now, that the measure of joy and sorrow is exactly proportioned to our capacity to suffer or enjoy, that together they make up life, and life is good."

XXI

PROPHECY CONFIRMED

SEATED in the arbour at Montigny, I had made, from mere flux of words, certain prophecies of the future of mural painting in this country, which were twice confirmed within a year. In Paris Saint-Gaudens had described the work in Trinity Church in Boston and St. Thomas's in New York—first works of one whose hand has never since been idle and who, as the dean of our profession, all mural-painters delight to honour—and I was scarce ashore from the home-coming steamer before I learned that in my native city William Morris Hunt was at work upon two large decorations in the Assembly Chamber of our huge, costly and ill-inspired State Capitol.

Of Hunt I had heard much in my sojourn at Barbizon. His name was a household word in the Millet family, where his talent was esteemed, and where his service to the master, in proclaiming the merit of his work, when there were few who would listen, and fewer still to join in his generous propaganda of Millet's fame, was keenly remembered. There are many to-day, above all in his home-city of Boston, who can thank Hunt for a long possession of beautiful works by Millet, to say nothing of the accrued value of pictures which they originally procured for a song. The "Angelus," of the spectacular price, was originally painted for a Bostonian, a friend of Hunt's, who was

unconcernedly absent on a yachting trip when the painter, having finished his work and in desperate need of the money due him, was obliged to let another have the picture for the price agreed upon, about eight hundred dollars, a notable contrast to the two hundred thousand dollars for which the "Angelus" sold at the Hotel Drouot after a lapse of twenty years.

Babcock had also a fund of memories of his whilom comrade and, with something of the wonder of a recluse, described Hunt's life in France. More favoured by fortune than most of the painters of his time, it suited his extravagant humour to drive down from Paris to Barbizon behind a spanking team in a modish cart piled high with canvases and painter's paraphernalia, entering the village at a smart trot to the astonishment of all its inhabitants, unused to anything more rapid than the patient donkey. I remember also that when I took Hunt's book, "Talks on Art," which had been compiled by one of his women-pupils and was published about that time, to Babcock, that he read it, and then returned it with the comment: "That sounds like Hunt's ideas, but it is Hunt's talk with all the pepper and salt left out."

The liberal seasoning of his conversation with words which, in polite literature, are habitually represented by dashes, was possibly a family tradition; for many of us remember the astonishingly virile and picturesque talk of his brother, the late eminent architect, Richard Morris Hunt, as having the same punctuation. And, with William Morris Hunt I was to have an example of this prodigal vocabulary, in the course of an afternoon's talk during a meeting which was so strangely

impressive, that it rises in my memory as clear cut in its slightest detail as though it had occurred yesterday.

I knew and admired many of Hunt's pictures and was familiar with his career as a pupil of Couture, through his later association with Millet, and his beneficial activity as a teacher and artist in Boston; and when, soon after my arrival in Albany, a young architect who knew him offered to take me to see his work in the Assembly Chamber of the Capitol, I eagerly welcomed the opportunity to meet him.

The decorations on which he was engaged were painted directly upon the sandstone which lined the walls of the Assembly Chamber, high under the groined ceiling; their surface reaching down to the tops of a row of five or six windows which, on either side, lit the room. Wide platforms for the painters' use had been built over these windows at the base of the surfaces to be painted, which screened the light by which they were eventually to be seen, and necessitated the use of artificial light during the course of their execution. The position of these platforms lifted them high above the floor of the Assembly Chamber, and crossing the gulf between, from one platform to the other, ran a narrow bridge. A fairly practicable stairway had been built by which to reach the level of the platforms, and up this my architect friend and I climbed one winter afternoon.

Arriving at the upper level, we found ourselves enveloped in twilight, with the great painting on the wall hardly distinguishable, as no lights were lit. There was already a party of three or four persons,

two of them ladies, wandering over the surface of the platform, peering into the shadow in an endeavour to see Hunt's work. But our attention was at once fixed upon the figure of the painter. He was very tall, apparently over six feet in height, with a profuse beard falling over his chest. He wore a skull-cap on his head, and carried on one arm a zither, on which he struck a few disconnected notes from time to time, as he marched to and fro over the bridge connecting the two platforms, as apparently unconscious of the presence of his other visitors or ourselves as though we were astral bodies, instead of human beings who had climbed many steps in our desire to bring him a willing admiration for his work. As he approached the end of the bridge, near where we stood, in the course of his perambulation, my friend greeted him, and presented me as a young painter interested in decoration. "Well, look around," he said as, turning his back, he resumed his pacing, like a captive lion in his cage.

It was easier said than done. There were figures vast and shadowy on the wall before us, and the general silhouette of the composition could be made out, but that was about all. The other visitors were even more puzzled than we were by the strange situation and, as the painter again approached the platform where we were, they went to him, thanked him for the privilege of seeing his work, to which he hardly made audible response, and started down the stairway. We allowed them to depart and then, when Hunt had again crossed the bridge, which all this while he had paced with a nervous, hurried step, we in turn approached. I was disconcerted and nettled at a reception which might,

I felt, have been so different. We had waited until near the close of the day so that we might not interrupt his work, and my interest was so genuine and so legitimate, in comparison with that inspired by mere curiosity—for the sins of this last variety of visitor we were probably suffering—that I felt myself hardly used. After I had said a few civil and conventional words, and we had mutually turned our backs on each other—Hunt scarce waiting the time that the most elementary politeness demanded—a revulsion of feeling came over me and turning, I fairly shouted after him:

"Before I go I ought to tell you that a few months ago I was in Barbizon, where I knew the Millets and Babcock." At the sound of these three magic words he instantly turned with: "Wait, my God, what did you say? Millet, Barbizon. You know Billy Babcock; why didn't you say so at once? Here, wait!" and, coming off the bridge, he called to an assistant, who had remained motionless in a corner somewhere during this scene, and ordered him to "light up." "All the lights on both platforms; we want to see these things," he commanded. Then, his manner entirely changed, though a strange intensity of excitement never left him, he said cordially: "Bless me, but I'm glad to see some one from Barbizon! Here, sit down, have a cigar, and tell me all about the old place and the Millets and Babcock—Billy Babcock, damn him, how is he?" Questions and answers alternated, and my budget of news was so often interrupted in its disclosure, by interjected memories recalled to the painter by familiar names and places, that an hour passed quickly.

Meanwhile great flaring gas torches lit up the two platforms and the vault of the ceiling above, while below, in the gloom, all the workmen upon the floor having left as the quitting-time had come, the emptiness of the great void lent a sensation of strangeness to the scene. My architect friend had been called away, and we two sat alone until Hunt's curiosity and my information were alike exhausted. "Now I want you to see my work and, mind you, don't be afraid of saying just what you think about it."

Neither panel was completed, he told me, though their effect was but little changed when I saw them some months after from the floor, after the scaffolding had been removed. They were very noble works. From a motive which can be easily understood I did not that afternoon touch upon a feeling that I had, that, called upon late in life to execute works upon a scale which was unfamiliar to him, Hunt had reverted in these works to his earlier school practices and the lessons of his master Couture.

Any one who in the Louvre to-day looks upon the "*Décadence Romaine*," the chief work of Thomas Couture, must feel that the chorus of approval which rewarded the painter when the picture made its first appearance in the Salon of 1848 was ill judged. His after history suffices to prove this; and the belief that was then general, that a second Veronese was born to France, is no longer held. Works of smaller scope are numerous enough to prove that Couture, within this limitation, was a great, if incomplete, painter; but he as evidently was one of those who owe more to the museums and to the great painters that have lived

Flight of Night and the Discoverer

From the decorations by William Morris Hunt, in the Capitol at Albany

before him, than he owes to his individual view of nature. His teaching, once so popular, was chiefly based upon a number of technical recipes that took little account of the infinite variety of nature in her types, in her ever-changing colour and her strongly individualized form. Hunt, in his smaller works, had long discarded the influences of his earlier training, and though Millet, in many of his figures, and Corot, in most of his landscapes, can be felt as a partial impulsion, his own individual temperament as a painter is sufficiently strong to overweigh any other influence but that of nature translated by the hand of a strong and capable painter.

In these two works of large scope it was but natural that the painter, long divorced from any hope that he should ever be called upon to do work of this character, should be taken by surprise; and that, in the perplexity of the problem, he should fall back upon these discarded principles as the solution nearest at hand.

With this reservation, however, there was enough and to spare for admiration of these two noble works. They are absolutely lost to the world now, hidden behind a false ceiling that was built in order that our noble legislators might listen to the sound of their own eloquence; the acoustic properties of the Assembly Chamber demanding this sacrifice of the proportions of the room, and thereby hiding these two panels. Even before this drastic change was made, however, the panels had suffered from the changing of their colours for, against all precedent and deaf to all advice, the painter had executed his work directly upon the sandstone wall; and the climatic alternations of heat

and cold upon this absorbent stone had all but wrought their ruin before they were hidden from sight.

That afternoon between these panels, fresh from his hand, I walked with the painter, viewing the work from varying distances, listening to his explanation of their subjects and his methods of execution and voicing my sincere admiration, in which was mingled a note of joy on finding in my own land, in my own native city, done by my own countryman, works of such scope. High upon the slender bridge that day I seemed to look over a great stretch of country, dotted with fair monuments and, in each of these, a busy horde of artists working gladly in the service of their native land; and not the least curious part of this dream of youth is that part of it, at all events, has come true!

At last we stood together, about midway on this bridge, below us the dark space of the empty chamber, the torches flaming on either side illuminating the great solemn paintings, and at my side the tall form of the painter, his expressive face, brilliant-eyed, bent toward me.

"Well, what do you think the painters will say to these?" he inquired, waving his hand in the direction of his work. "What can they say but admire them," I answered; "every painter in the country must be glad to see such work undertaken, and you have not only more than won the right to be chosen for the work, but how many of our men are there who would dare undertake it?"

"I think I know one or two who would have liked to try it," grimly laughed the painter in return, "but on

the whole, painters are pretty good fellows, and I don't fear their verdict so much. But," and here his voice fell, and he enunciated each word slowly, "What—do —you—think—the—public—will—say?"

Here I had no answer ready, for I explained that I was so newly home that I still felt the motion of the steamer; that I had been long away; that—in a word—I knew no more of the possible public feeling than a babe unborn.

The painter's voice rose in pitch and, with a gesture of his clenched fist, defying the vault above us, which echoed back his defiance, incidentally calling upon his Creator to witness his words, he declared that he cared nothing for the verdict of the people. Then, grasping me by the arm, approaching nearer, in a strident undertone he fairly hissed in my ear: "Yes, I do, you know damned well I do. *Young man, we can't get along without them!*"

Here this strange interview ended, and though we parted at the foot of the stairway most cordially, Hunt bidding me to climb his stair at any time that I felt inclined, and again expressing his pleasure in the news that I had brought of his friends across the water, I never availed myself of his permission.

In a few months the scaffolding came down, the works were visible to all; but the people, whose verdict he could not do without, were for the most part non-committal. Some were facetious; it is hard to curb our irreverence apparently; a few were pedantically critical, demanding the effulgence of noonday instead of welcoming the dawn of new art; but of real public interest there was none for this decoration,

which, whatever its shortcomings, represented the crowning work of a painter who deserved more recognition of his achievement than his indifferent fellow-countrymen ever accorded to him.

I never saw William Morris Hunt again. In the following year he died; but I am not likely to ever forget the few hours I passed, high in air, in his impressive presence, listening to his conversation, filled with enthusiasm and wise with the knowledge of his craft, though larded with strange oaths. Of these last I have spared my reader to some extent, but I thought of that scene when, years after, Stevenson described to me the first draft of the play of "Deacon Brodie," which he and Henley wrote, as "being at least remarkable from the recurrence of the name of the Deity taken in vain, more times than in any other example of the British drama."

In the case of the painter he was probably quite unconscious, in the thrall of a fixed habit, of his superfluity of emphasis, which indeed he may have found useful, in his long career as a missionary of art, in Boston, as a means of fixing the attention of those with whom a more suave address would have failed to pierce the armour of indifference. A great and lonely figure, despite the local popularity which through social position and forceful personality his city lent him for a time, Hunt shows, as do other instances, that of Washington Allston notably, that our general diffusion of intelligence, our scheme of civilization through education and the printed book is but partial, and leaves the sister force of art, which older civilizations have fostered on an equality with literature, out of consideration.

XXII

A NANTUCKET INTERLUDE

WITH the briefest possible mention the experiences of the next few years may be passed over, for my activities during this time have but little general interest. I met with the difficulties that are usual to the young artist in gaining a foothold in the land of his nativity; in the course of which, listening to the advice of others, I exiled myself from New York and, in the pursuit of an evasive Americanism, passed the best part of two summers in painting out of doors a large picture representing a local traditional event, for which, when finished, no one, including to some degree the painter, cared. I gained, however, a pleasant memory of eighteen months, including the whole of one winter, passed on the Island of Nantucket; a witness of a late survival of the antique virtues of the fathers and a recipient of more kindness from its people —shown to a half-foreign artist and his wholly foreign wife—than can be enregistered here. Less cheering, perhaps, are the memories of the total isolation in which a self-exiled artist must live in a New England village; his lack of kindly intercourse with those who speak the language of art; the absence of helpful criticism from the man at your elbow, and the resultant indecision and morbid doubt that paralyzes work done under such conditions. John Trumbull's father is said to have warned his son, when the latter announced his

intention to study art, that "Boston was not Athens." From putting into practice a theory that to be of one's time, to express a native sentiment in art, one should live in a characteristic native town in close touch with its life, another young American artist, many years after, learned after a winter on the island, that—though its climate was better, its manners and morals superior, and its people kind beyond comparison—nevertheless, Nantucket was not Barbizon.

It would be unjust, however, not to note one happy exception to this rule of isolation that a portion of my sojourn on Nantucket knew.

I had met Eastman Johnson in the meetings of the S. A. A., and perhaps the knowledge of the admirable work that he had done at Nantucket, in his case a true expression of his temperament, was not without its influence in the choice of a testing-ground for my theory—or rather the theory of others to which I had lent a consenting ear. He had a handsome summer home upon the sand dunes fronting the water, that are dignified as the Cliffs in Nantucket parlance, and the ancient landmark, in the shape of a hip-roofed cottage that I leased for our occupancy, was not far away. The bluff, hearty welcome accorded to the newcomer by the successful painter, whose pictures had long been accepted by our artists and our people, and whose portraits, if gathered together, would in themselves constitute a gallery of noted Americans, was characteristic of the man, who, lately gone from us, departed leaving none but friends. Robust, kindly petulant in manner, florid of complexion, sturdy of figure, not so far removed in type, though he was thoroughly a man

of the world, from some of the retired captains that he painted so well in his "Nantucket School of Philosophy," Eastman Johnson mingled with his neighbours on terms that explain in his work the easy seizure of character, the complete fidelity of type, the essential quality of sympathetic representation rendered. Technically, this was achieved with a knowledge of his craft that pleased the public and satisfied the more critical requirements of his fellow-artists. He was a well-trained artist, above all a painter in oil; one of the few of his time, among our painters, conversant with the qualities which differentiate that medium—which all use and so few know as the painters of the past were trained to know—from other media of pictorial expression. He was fond of rich colour, with which to his eye all objects were invested, and in this he was a direct descendant from the painters of Holland, in whose schools and galleries he had learned these secrets. Joined to his quality of unctuous colour, he had an accurate grasp of form, which served him well in the portraits, which were his principal works during the last decades of his practice. In the compositions of American rural life by which, with his portraits, he will be best remembered, this accuracy of representation gives an added value to the many vanished types of our earlier life; and the future place of Eastman Johnson in our art is assured by a long series of masterly works.

The long evenings of the autumn and the early winter, for he lingered late upon the island, remain memorable; for Eastman Johnson had a store of anecdote which pictured his earlier days as an art student

in Germany, Belgium, and Holland; and his later experiences of men and conditions in Washington and New York—the last as strange and interesting to his listener as the stories of his student life were familiar in essence, though different in detail. An ideal host in his pleasant home, we had merry gatherings around the dinner table, and the ladies of the two families vied in friendly rivalry, with the opposing cook-books of two nations, to furnish a material complement to our spiritual refreshment.

Especially valuable to one who floundered in an effort to make of a local incident, which though tragic was grotesque, an acceptable picture, were his criticisms upon the work I had begun; and when the following summer the picture was completed, I am glad to remember that this master of American genre painting found more to interest him in my "Skipper Ireson" than the press of the time, or any of my more immediate contemporaries, voiced a few months after, when it was exhibited at the Society of American Artists.

During all this period, up to November, 1880, when my Nantucket experience ended, letters had been exchanged with the comrades in Europe more or less intermittently. As it was to be to the end, Louis Stevenson's correspondence can be best described as intermittent; at times letters following with hardly the time between for a response; at others a prolonged silence, which no inquiring letter could break; while as for Bob, he was avowedly the worst letter writer in the world as to quantity, and in quality his rare epistles were mostly given up to ingenious explanations of protracted with-

Nantucket from the beach

drawal from human intercourse, or an exposition of the dearth of matter epistolary.

When one's personal news consists principally of reiterated accounts of disaster, more or less serious, one is wisely inspired perhaps to refrain from letter-writing; and we know now that circumstance bore heavily on my two friends during that period; and, as on this side of the Atlantic, fortune was not smiling on the third friend, the light of our mutual correspondence dwindled, flickered, and went out.

A year went by when one day in Nantucket I received a post-card whose brief words told me much, but not enough, of Louis Stevenson. Here it is:

"New York, *August* 7, 1880.

"My dear Low:

"My wife and I were looking all day yesterday for you and Mrs. L.; at last we found you were at Nantucket. To-day we sail for England. All we can do this trip is to wish you good-by and God-speed.

"Yours very sincerely,

"Robert Louis Stevenson."

Part of Stevenson's story I divined; his presence here and his return to England with a wife could only mean that his apparently hopeless affection had been rewarded —a fitting recompense for an abiding faith and such courageous devotion as I could, then, only faintly imagine. "What a man truly wants, that will he get, or he will be changed in trying," was an aphorism that he wrote afterward and on which, in the quest of what he truly wanted, he had acted when he left England in

August, 1879. In his letters, in the "Life" by Graham Balfour and in the "Amateur Emigrant," the story is fully told, and need not be repeated here. I learned in after talk with Louis that some part of the day of his first arrival in New York he had sought to find me, through the rain, laden with the "six fat volumes of Bancroft's 'History of the United States'"; his first purchase on landing, dictated by a conscientious desire to acquaint himself with the country through which he was to journey.

Perhaps, if he could have found me, he might have been induced to break this journey and enjoy a much-needed rest before confronting the fatigues of an emigrant train; but I was already gone from the city, and so, uncheered by the God-speed of a comrade, he set his face across the plains. He had learned that I was at Nantucket, which he had understood was "some outlandish place, far out at sea"; and why, during the year of his trial in California, he never wrote me, he afterward explained, was by reason of the uncertainty in which he lived—and nearly died—in that dreadful year. A portion of this time, at least, he was joined to Nantucket by a closer link than he knew, for in the dedication of "Prince Otto" he speaks of the house in Monterey where the book was begun: "an old wooden house embowered in creepers; a house that was far gone in the respectable stages of antiquity and seemed indissoluble from the green garden in which it stood, and that yet was a sea-traveller in its younger days, and had come round the Horn piecemeal in the belly of a ship." Perhaps, in truth, this may have been a sister-house to that in which I dwelt in Nantucket; for in

the days of '49, accompanying the exodus of a large part of its male population, many such houses were taken down in Nantucket and shipped as ballast to California, to shelter the argonauts in their quest for gold. And so, perhaps, two friends, sundered by space, may have looked through windows upon different seas, not forgetting, but each preoccupied by different problems; and, deaf to the voices of inanimate surroundings, have slept under roofs that once stood side by side and shared sunshine and rain together.

As has been seen, Stevenson was no more fortunate, on his return through New York after the happy termination of his trial, in his effort to grasp the hand of an old friend, than I was in thus missing the opportunity of being the first to congratulate him on his marriage. A letter, however, promptly repaired in part this misfortune, though six more years were to elapse before we again met—"with all and much more than all of the old affection; which is a fine thing to be able to say"—in the city of our youth, Paris.

XXIII

COMRADES IN NEW YORK

MEANWHILE the temporary Nantucketer had returned to New York, called thither by John La Farge, with the flattering assurance that his decorative instincts might find their use in the assistance that he might render for some important work Mr. La Farge was about to undertake. Of the year that followed I could find much to say but for the circumstance, fortunate for us all, that he who guided my efforts—and pardoned my mistakes—continues the active practice of his art, and so precludes the expression of what might seem superfluous (and superlative) compliment. This much, however, may be expressed, since it is of general application. The experience of solving practical problems, born of the necessities of work, which on the morrow may take its place as a part of a general scheme of decoration, is of extreme value to any theorist in the decorative arts. The power of imagining how work will appear, when seen in the light and in the surrounding for which it is designed, is equally of importance. I have the word of Puvis de Chavannes that "without this inborn faculty a man had best leave decoration alone"; but with even a fair exercise of this faculty, work seen in place for the first time holds many surprises of a disillusioning nature, which, fortunately, are in many cases susceptible of correction. In his ordinary practice a decorator may

learn to avoid and guard against such error; but such practice may be greatly limited by the long intervals occurring between successive works. It is good fortune, therefore, to have great quantities of work embracing many different problems, ranging from simple tones to cover a wall to decorative ornament, pictorial representation, and even sculpture and embroideries—for all these, the pictorial work comprising both painting and stained glass, made up, that eventful year, the activities of the "shop," as we called it, in imitative memory of the *bottega* in which the Italian artist of the *cinque-cento* worked. In most of this the neophyte was allowed to have a hand, and from all he gained practical experience; of which, through his future work, he was to feel the benefit as far outweighing any previous study by which he had essayed to profit.

During this year two of my Paris friends returned to New York. Augustus Saint-Gaudens came back, bringing the statue of Farragut, which upon its erection was recognized, and has remained, as a masterwork of sculpture; sharing only with H. K. Brown's "Washington," in Union Square, J. Q. A. Ward's "Indian Hunter," in Central Park, and Saint-Gaudens' own "Sherman," in the Plaza on Fifth Avenue, any part of its preëminence as a notable monument in our city.

New York was not to work its spell upon Saint-Gaudens at once, for his first months in the city, where he was immediately overwhelmed with orders and opportunities for work, were tormented by the ceaseless activity he felt about him. Already in Paris he had dwelt upon the hustle and bustle of our life here, which

he contrasted with his life in Rome, and compared unfavourably with that of Paris, with its realization that art is long, and its acceptance of the calm and studied production of its artists. He had then confided to me his intention, and his hope that, when the "Farragut" and the other commissions which he had brought with him were finished, he could, with the profit resulting from these tasks, devote himself for two or three years "to do something for himself," some work that would embody the fullest expression of his talent as he himself conceived it.

I doubt if the "Farragut," with the method of work already strong upon him, a method of unsparing effort and continuous improvement, purchased at the cost of equally continuous changes, left any margin of profit whatever; and the habit of self-criticism and sedulous research of ultimate perfection grew stronger as time went on, and never gave him the leisure, in his too short life, to do more than respond to the definite demands made upon him by our country, that in his case was so fortunately inspired as to appreciate and give constant employment to our greatest sculptor.

The spell of our city, which at first exercised this disturbing effect, grew upon Saint-Gaudens; and though in after years his country home at Cornish was dear to him in both summer and winter, he soon became a most loyal citizen of New York. In the earlier years after his return, during the summers when our womenfolk had sought the sea or the mountains and the men were left in town, there were few corners of the city where we did not penetrate. These were the palmy days when Harrigan and Hart gave to New York, if

not a great work of art closely studied from nature, at least a clever caricature founded upon recognizable city types. Saint-Gaudens was one of the most appreciative frequenters of the downtown theatre, where this nearest approach to a native drama of our own was given, and his joy was unrestrained as we followed the moving accidents by flood and field of the Mulligan Guards.

With his frank *camaraderie*, in which was mingled the winning charm of the Celt, the Latin exuberance of Provence, and a large admixture of our own cheerful absence of formality, he drew about him many friends, so that frequently these diversions were shared by others, some of whom live to mourn him, some who have preceded him to the grave. Of these it is well within the elastic scope of this chronicle to recall the memory of Joseph M. Wells—Joe Wells, as he was known to his friends—as one of our younger architects, whose works, or those for which he was chiefly responsible, guard a certain anonymity to the public knowledge, as his practice was absorbed in that of the firm of architects where he was employed. I am confident, however, that McKim, Mead & White, have never sought to conceal the large part of merit due Wells for his share in the design of the façade of the Century Club or the handsome block of houses surrounding a spacious court on Madison Avenue between Fiftieth and Fifty-first streets, to name but two works in which his service was eminent; and these alone, though Wells died before giving the full measure of his talent, should serve to keep his memory as one who has done his part in the embellishment of our city. Though Wells had not a

drop of bitterness in his nature, it pleased his humour to play the cynic, as it pleased his friends to humour him, and to accentuate their asseverations of belief in his profound and deep-seated contempt for mankind. This he took in good part, and returned the compliment by a ready and all-embracing depreciation of his intimates, aiming his barbed wit with a shrewd strain of intelligence that more than once hit the mark.

Save in physical appearance he had much of Thackeray's Warrington, in "Pendennis," and the gentler side of his character in which, like his prototype, he was not deficient, was shown by his love for music. Chronologically, it was three or four years later that, through Wells' activity, the concerts of chamber music, by four musicians selected from the orchestra conducted in those days by Theodore Thomas, were given in the large studio in Thirty-sixth Street, which Saint-Gaudens had built for his work.

Some forty men—painters, sculptors, and architects for the most part—were joined in this enterprise, and for two years, every Sunday afternoon from October to May, we sat or reclined at our ease on the divans which ran along the walls of the studio, listening, with the pleasant accompaniment of tobacco, to the two violins, the viola, and the 'cello; and Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven were of the company. The death of our *impresario*, Wells, came to disperse rudely this harmonious assemblage, for none of us had the heart—as few would have had the ability—to reorganize the company for a third year, though, under other auspices, some survival of its organization still exists, I believe. Extracts from two letters of Saint-Gaudens show the

Joseph M. Wells

From the portrait by T. W. Dewing

two friends in so amiable a light that I must quote them here. The first, addressed to me at a time when I was spending a summer in Europe and Saint-Gaudens had newly set up his tent in Cornish, concludes as follows, first speaking of another friend who was there on a visit and was about to leave:

". . . and then Wells, the spitfire, will come on the scene, leave all his maliciousness off as he enters the house, as a turtle would its shell, and become one of the most companionable of men. . . ."

The second citation explains itself:

"148 West 36th St., *Feb.* 29, 1892.

"Dear Low:

"Next Sunday, March sixth, come to my studio at 3 P. M. The fellows who formed, during its early days, the quartette will be here to listen to three pieces of music of which Wells was fond. March first was his birthday, and a cherished desire on my part to recall him to our memories every year, in a way he would best like, I will carry into execution for the first time. None but the artists who used to come to the first concerts will be there.

"Thine, A. St. G."

In one incident of Saint-Gaudens' determination to give to the world none but his best, *coûte que coûte*, I happened to be involved. It was typical of many others, and relates to the statue of Captain Randall, the benefactor of the Sailors' Snug Harbor on Staten

Island. The sculptor had received the commission for this figure about the same time as that of the "Farragut," and in Paris had executed a half-size model, full of spirit and plausible veracity, although no portrait existed of the man it sought to celebrate. This, however, had left him free to realize a fine type of a captain in our merchant-marine at the beginning of the nineteenth century; and as the model was finished in every detail, all that remained was to have it enlarged—in part a mechanical process—ready for the final touches of the artist. This his friends had understood was being done in a temporary studio, somewhere in the upper part of New York, though none of us had seen it. We had heard much, however, of the impatience of the committee which had the erection of the statue in charge, who, seeing that the "Farragut" had been in place more than a year, and understanding that the "Randall" had been in an advanced state of progress for a much longer time, gave the sculptor little peace of mind in their pardonable desire to hasten the end of his labours. Such was the situation when one day Saint-Gaudens asked me to go to an address somewhere in the vicinity of One hundred and twenty-fifth Street—in those days this now busy locality seemed like the uttermost parts of the earth—where, at the office of a coal-yard, a key would be given me, when I explained that I came from him. With this key I was to enter a building in the rear of the coal-yard, where I would find the "Randall," now enlarged to its full size. I was to go alone, and was to study the statue "for at least half an hour," or until I felt that I had seen it sufficiently. By this time I knew my Saint-Gaudens

well enough to realize that he was asking from me some form of friendly service which was of serious import to him; and so, without further question or explanation, I departed on his errand. I executed his directions in every particular, and soon found myself in a large and sky-lighted shed, completely bare of all other objects than the small model and the full-sized statue of Randall.

The first impression made by the latter was distinctly unfavourable, and this, when confirmed after a more careful scrutiny, pained me considerably, for I had greatly admired the smaller model. I stayed my prescribed half-hour, and more, viewing the large figure from every side, and the more I studied it the more I found it lacking in the spirit, gracious but not unmanly, of the lesser figure, which was entirely by Saint-Gaudens' hand, while, of course, the enlarged statue was chiefly the work of an assistant. The loss of life and action I finally decided was more than superficial; the figure was of heavier mould throughout, and no deft working over the surface by Saint-Gaudens would regain for it the spirit which, it was conceivable, might readily have been lost by his less-inspired assistant. My conclusion was that in the enlargement definite errors of proportion had been made, which quite changed the character of the figure. I had no means of measurement by which, in comparison with the small model, I could verify this impression; but with a heavy heart and a lively anticipation of a bad quarter of an hour under the searching questions which I knew my friend had in reserve, I returned to meet him.

On my long journey downtown I debated seriously

with my conscience to determine my exact duty in the premises. I realized that to send the statue, after a few days of his own work, to the bronze-foundry to be cast would hasten its delivery to the committee, and the consequent payment of its price. I knew enough of the financial situation of my friend to realize that this solution would not only be the most desirable, but I also knew that the installation of his studio, and the expense of the large amount of work which he had in progress, had nearly drained dry his every resource. The committee in charge had strained its patience apparently to the last degree, and serious delay, such as would be necessitated for the complete revision of the statue, might possibly mean the withdrawal of the commission; for it must be remembered that at that time Saint-Gaudens had not attained his after-position of almost autocratic power in matters of sculpture; nor had he as yet schooled all committees in the potentiality of patient waiting that, in his case, meant no loss.

Finally all this divagation of mind centred on one thought: what would Saint-Gaudens do if the case was reversed? Undoubtedly he would enjoy his responsibility as little as I did, but, in a case of artistic conscience, he would, *coûte que coûte*, tell the truth. With a high resolve to consider only the art side of the question, I met my friend—or rather faced a catechist—for to the questions he put he divined my answers, soften them as I would. Finally in a tone of decision he said, "That settles it! I didn't tell you before, but I sent John La Farge and Stanford White in the same way I sent you to see the figure; and as all three of you

without consultation say the same thing, it simply confirms my own feeling. The figure must come down." "But the committee?" I urged. As some of these gentlemen may be still living, and as for all of them Saint-Gaudens at other moments had the highest respect, it is unnecessary to record the quite impersonal remark that answered this objection. "But with a certain amount of your own work on the figure as it stands—" I began, in further desire to ward off impending disaster; but here Saint-Gaudens wearily interrupted me with: "Low, do you honestly believe that with the figure in its present condition I could by any effort of my own make it as good as the Farragut?" and, seeing me hesitate, he added, "what would you have me do?" And I found the courage to say that I would have him do it over.

The episode was not ended there, however. Careful measurement proved beyond doubt that the small model had been improperly enlarged, and the great figure was pulled down. Then ensued a period of dissatisfaction with the small model on the part of the sculptor, and in spite of all the persuasion his friends could employ, he began another and different half-sized model. How he parried the impatience of the committee, that all this time hovered as it were in the background, I know not. Probably his varied nationality was brought into play; and the blarney of Ireland, the suavity of the South of France, and the resourcefulness of the United States were all taxed to procure the necessary delay. The second model was far inferior to the first; on this point his friends were tacitly agreed; though Saint-Gaudens had by this time reached a point

of nervous tension where, as he worked on his second model with dogged perseverance, he no longer asked advice or criticism, which we, intuitively, refrained from offering.

At last the second model was finished, and happening in his studio one morning, I learned that the ever-menacing committee was expected that afternoon. Together we entered the smaller of his two studios where, before a background of drapery, stood the two models side by side. We sat down before them, one of us hoping in his secret soul that the other would not ask the question that he saw impending. Almost at once came the dreaded query: "Which do you like best?" and honesty answered, "The first, by all odds." There was a moment of very painful silence, and then Saint-Gaudens said, as though talking to himself: "I don't believe that I'll let the committee see that first model again"; and then, almost immediately, with a complete change of tone, manner, and countenance, he cried, "*Ah! quelle bonne idée*, I'll not show them the second!" Quite joyfully, he called an assistant and had the second model removed; and I left him, happier than I had seen him for weeks, ready to face *his* bad quarter hour with the committee, and explain as best he could the sudden reversion to his first model. He afterward had this "pointed up"—enlarged with mathematical accuracy—and then, after his skilful retouching, the finished figure in the clay was cast in plaster, moulded in bronze, and erect on its pedestal the effigy of Samuel Randall looks to-day from the shores of Staten Island, with the Sailors' Snug Harbor of his foundation for a background—a characteristic

work of a sculptor who uttered nothing base, who always, *coûte que coûte*, gave of his best.

The second friend, whose arrival from Paris was noted some pages back, was Theodore Robinson. He had returned to the home of his parents in Wisconsin, and it was easy to read between the lines of his letters that Evansville, Wis., "was not Athens"—or Paris.

In addition to my work for Mr. La Farge, I had been given, again through the friendly intermediary of Wyatt Eaton, a position as teacher of drawing in a fashionable school in the city. The necessities of the "shop" were such as to demand all my time, however, and, to extricate Robinson from surroundings where, as he wrote, he was fast relapsing into a vegetable state, it was easily arranged that he was to come on to New York and replace me in my function as drawing-master. In some respects this was but a scurvy trick to play on a friend, as I took pains to explain to him, for while teaching a class of art students interested in their work and absorbed in their studies is one of the most useful and inspiring employments for an artist, superficial instruction in drawing, in the few hours of the week that can be allotted to such study in the curriculum of a popular school, is quite a different matter.

Both Robinson and I in after-time were enabled to do what we could in the higher instruction of our art—he in the schools of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and I in the Woman's Art School of Cooper Union and in the National Academy of Design; but, in the earlier instance of which I speak, it was chiefly as a bread-winner that it had appealed to me, and

it was upon this basis that my friend accepted it in turn.

The emoluments were not great; but Robinson, more than any of my craft that I have known, was endowed with that supremely useful virtue of frugality; and the small salary he received sufficed for his wants. His extremely few wants, in truth, for no one ever rose superior to the ordinary and material comforts of life more than he. Nay, from the time when he found certain advantages in sleeping, curled up in a cupboard, in his Paris studio, like some Diogenes in his tub, he scrupulously avoided what he considered pampering luxuries, that were in other eyes the most ordinary comforts. I have known him to abandon a commodious studio with a living-room attached, which had been provided him by well-meaning but too-solicitous friends, for a bare room at the top of four flights of stairs, where he could sleep on a cot behind a screen, and "be free from the tyranny of modern conveniences."

He derived certain advantages from this Spartan attribute when, in after years, he faced the discomforts of the country inns where he passed his winters in France; and at all times his dignified and self-sustaining frugality enabled him to be more his own master than the majority of mankind. His art at the time of his first return from his studies in Europe seemed to some of us already full of promise, though it lacked the qualities of colour, and the rarer merit of the retention in a finished work of the initial charm of a sketch, that later gained for him the most enviable distinction that an artist can attain—the approval of his fellow-craftsmen.

Not long after his arrival in New York the demand

for additional assistance in the "shop" enabled him to enter the employ of Mr. La Farge, and added him to the number at work there who persuaded themselves for a year or so that the days of the Italian Renaissance were revived on Manhattan Island. Here Robinson developed a delicate and refined decorative sense that, at the time, promised to dominate his work. He had always had a very pretty vein of imagination, and as he was a man of extensive reading, he made many composition sketches, inspired most frequently by the poets. In view of his later devotion to the tenets of a school of art where such tendencies are frowned upon, it is curious to remember the days when Milton, Keats and Swinburne were the gods he chose to follow. Taking him as he was, then or later, he was to his intimates a rare and cheering presence. To the indifferent he opposed an indifference that, in comparison with his physical proportions, was almost monumental; and these could scarce understand the charm which lay hidden in this reticent, self-reliant—and at times cynically frank—personality. His delicate constitution imposed from his birth many burdens upon him, and he had early learned to limit his enjoyments in work or play. His life he had regulated to ensure his most cherished desire for independence, and he systematically demanded little from the world in general, only willing to receive from his intimates much less than—it was his only prodigality—he gave in return.

To carry so much of his story as I can tell here to the point where I would leave it for the present, it may be said that after a time in Mr. La Farge's employ Robinson went to Boston, to fill a similar position in a decora-

tive house established there by Prentice Treadwell. Here he remained for three years, doing, however, work which, under his contract, was entirely of his own invention, so that in a number of private houses in Newport and elsewhere there is charming decoration by his hand.

After this period he found himself in possession of sufficient means to return to Europe, where, in France, under the influence of Claude Monet, his art was to mature, and where for the moment I may leave him.

XXIV

TRANS-ATLANTIC MESSAGES

THE sequence of experimental years went on four, six, eight—years in which the clipper-ship of youth was to "find" itself, to make repeated voyages—ofttimes to strange ports, piloted by hope, where no cargo rewarded the venture; more often in ballast on unwilling cruises, where the return cargo was of dubious quality; to acquire the confidence of a limited class of shippers; and, in the end, to settle down as a common carrier in the merchant-marine of the arts; achieving, perchance, a career of usefulness, albeit the underwriters may be loth to accord the A-1 rating to which the master-mariner aspired when he first set sail.

To this side of the Atlantic there came at irregular intervals many letters telling of conditions not unlike those which were being lived through—and down—here. It is in such years that a man's friends are of avail. In the depth of winter to my literally ice-bound isolation in Nantucket there had sailed from milder climes that gracious, though tolerably anemic, lady painted by Botticelli in his "Birth of Venus," in the Uffizzi in Florence, in the guise of a photograph of the picture sent me by Saint-Gaudens, who at the time was revisiting Italy. The picture was then entirely unknown to me, and the photograph, now sadly faded, has hung before my eyes from that day to this, and is

counted among my most treasured possessions; though since those days I have been fortunately enabled to pay due obeisance to the lady *in propria persona* upon the wall of the Uffizzi, from which she smiles, immortal.

The advent of this photograph, accompanied by a letter, which, alas, is lost, filled with the enthusiasm of the discovery of new beauties in a land which my friend loved; to one seated in an attic chamber in Nantucket looking out on a winter sea, engaged in concocting Biblical illustrations, without models, without data, without preparation or adequate knowledge—hag-ridden by a sense of failure—meant a new lease of hope.

I would fain avoid any sense of mere protestation in thus piping unceasingly my "penny-whistle" in praise of friendship, but the unknowing service rendered in such a case as this, or in the interchange of letters—in which we are generally more truly ourselves than in the spoken word—can hardly be overstated.

Such were the messages that came in those days from Louis Stevenson—such, indeed, are those which come more rarely to-day from other friends; for, though the great destroyer has dealt many blows, some few survive, and though the musician may be shorter of breath, the penny-whistle still plays the self-same air.

Bob, as I have said, found the scene in which he moved, the friend with whom he could talk, more appealing than long-distance communication. Still there were a few letters and constant messages from or concerning him in his cousin's letters. Persistent gnawing at its principal had devoured his little fortune down to the last crumb and, all unprepared in any of the by-paths of art, incapable of illustration, of assistance in

decoration—if there was any decoration in England at that time; or of instruction in art—an effort in that direction furnished as its chief result a most amusing description of the trials of a drawing-master; he could only paint pictures—which no one would buy. "Do people ever sell pictures—I mean, freely and fairly—in open market, and when they please as they sell stocks?" was a cry of the heart interjected into one of his strangely scattering epistles. "Can you believe that I constantly talk of you both with my wife and yet never write? It is, however, true, and what is more, I can't write now I try. I loathe the operation. I can't say anything I want, so I will stop," is another; to which follows three pages of postscript, of a most personal nature, in the same exclamatory style—and then a poem—and a poem, save the mark, in French!

Probably no eyes but ours have ever seen this; but, as an extenuating circumstance to a later indiscretion of my own, and because it paints the man and his mood at the time, I give here his experiment in a difficult metre and a foreign tongue.

Longtemps j'ai lutté contre le destin;
Croyant que la vie était un festin;
Que, si le Bonheur se faisait attendre,
Il serait plus doux s'il venait surprendre,
Comme un beau dessert, la fin du repas.
Mais à chaque plat; quand on ne voit pas
Autre mets offert que l'eau et le vide;
On finit par se croire chez le Barmecide,
Berné du Vizir; le Vizir c'est Dieu;
Se moquant de nous dans l'azur des cieux!
Espérons toujours; coupons dans la farce;
Peut-être que Dieu pense à ses comparses,

Et comme le Vizir, n'est pas méchant,
Mais tout bonnement un mauvais plaisant,
Qui, pour les acteurs dans ce triste monde,
Prépare un souper où la joie abonde.

Much later I learned in detail of trials, which, at the time, seemed so much the natural lot of one who balks at the harness in which the majority of mankind amble contentedly, and seeks the freedom of the field of art, that I merely thought it characteristic that my friend should "put in a day" wrestling with the intricacies of French verse, while the colour was drying on his palette, despite his further avowal: "I find that being hard up in London is not attended with amusement as it often is in Paris."

He lacked, unfortunately, the resource of his cousin, inasmuch as he had no father living, whose purse could come to his rescue when all else failed. "I fall always on my feet, but I am constrained to add that the best part of my legs seems to be my father," was an expression of gratitude on the part of Louis; but Bob had no such support and had only his brush to look to. Episodes of this struggle were told me in after-time. One such experience was with an amateur who desired to acquire "a few chaste bedroom pictures." "What would you call a 'chaste' landscape?" inquired my friend; "something cool and gray, I suppose," he continued, answering his own query, "but mine were mostly fiery sunsets!"

In the comprehensive volumes of the "Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," edited by Sidney Colvin, generous use has been made of the letters addressed to me and, as they may be read there, I shall quote

only from those not previously published, except a few words now and then necessary for the clarity of my narration.

From one of these, inspiring to receive by one engaged, like the writer, in the chase of minor carnivora, I extract these lines. " . . . I am now a person with an established ill-health—a wife—a dog possessed with an evil, a Gadarrean spirit—a chalet on a hill, looking out over the Mediterranean—a certain reputation—and very obscure finances. Otherwise, very much the same, I guess; and were a bottle of Fleury a thing to be obtained, capable of developing theories along with a fit spirit even as of yore. Yet I now draw near to the middle ages; near three years ago that fatal Thirty struck; and yet the great work is not yet done—not yet even conceived. But so, as one goes on, the wood seems to thicken, the footpath to narrow, and the House Beautiful on the hill's summit to draw further and further away. We learn indeed to use our means; but only to learn, along with it, the paralyzing knowledge that these means are only applicable to two or three poor commonplace motives. Eight years ago, if I could have slung ink as I can now, I should have thought myself well on the road after Shakespeare; and now—I find I have only got a pair of walking shoes and not yet begun to travel. And art is still away there on the mountain summit. But I need not continue; for, of course, this is your story just as much as it is mine; and, strange to think, it was Shakespeare's, too, and Beethoven's, and Phidias'. It is a blessed thing that, in this forest of art, we can pursue our woodlice and sparrows, *and not catch them*, with almost the same

fervour of exhilaration as that with which Sophocles hunted and brought down the Mastodon. . . ."

Prostrating illness or impending death never caused the brave spirit of Louis Stevenson to quail, but he had from the first, by a strange contradiction, a childish terror of growing old. "The gods love me not," he complained but a few weeks before he was struck down in mid-career at the threshold of his greatest work; and there are multiplied instances of his dread of the benign malady to which, with its compensatory maturity of expression, the world owes some of its greatest work in art and letters. Of course, it was no apprehension of physical discomfort (or worse) that thus alarmed him, but the distrust of failing power, where, in one instance, the spectre of Scott stood menacingly before his vision. And, like the true artist, while his moods possessed him, they varied, and we find him, at periods close together, adjuring Edmund Gosse: "Treasure your strength, and may you never learn by experience the profound *ennui* and irritation of the shelved artist. For then what is life?" and shortly after, drawing for Henley a picture of "this pleasant middle age into whose port we are steering."

A casual reference to Bob's entrance into the field of criticism had evidently brought from me some flippant rejoinder, that would read strangely even to me nowadays, with all these printed pages chargeable to my own temporary withdrawal from the work for which I was trained; to say nothing of the many desultory papers I have written since the day when R. L. S. (without so much as asking by your leave) cast me floundering in the sea of ink. I had—and despite the

inconsistency of my practice still retain in a limited sense—the common prejudice of my profession against the painter who writes. This antipathy has a basis of reason when the practising painter treats of his contemporary practitioners in print, for there ensues a violation of the principles of fair play, as they are roughly defined in the ethics of our craft, when one artist publicly criticises another, who, in the nature of things, is voiceless. This exercise of his pen, the present writer may be permitted to remark parenthetically, he has avoided, only considering his contemporaries in one or two instances, and then only for the purpose of unstinted praise.

This inimical attitude, which is widespread among the members of our craft in this country, is otherwise ordered in France, where many of the greatest artists have written, without loss of prestige in their proper art, and where one at least, Eugène Fromentin, in his "Maîtres d'Autrefois," has given the world a book which could only have been written by a painter; and which is not only, in its lucid and chastened diction, a masterpiece of literature, but is also the clearest exposition of the technical and expressional qualities of the great masters of our art that the world has yet known.

All this should have been in my mind when I made some thoughtless reference to Bob's supposed "desertion of the cause," which brought me from Louis this serious remonstrance:

"Bob has just been staying with me in the character of sick-nurse while my wife was away. When I write I will upbraid him for his silence. You know, I sup-

pose, that he is married and a father? highly uxorious and the most devoted parent; more improved than any man I ever knew or read of; but, alas! deadly impecunious. Hence this burst into art criticism; his poverty but not his will consented, and as the step is archi-necessary, and not grateful to the poor soul, I shall take the liberty of suppressing your message anent his consistency. We really do not think he will ever make anything of painting; and we are all in a plot, sugaring him off on literature with my jesuitical pretensions. If you wish to help, and you should ever see any merit in one of his papers that you could in conscience approve of, make him a complimentary letter. Of course, he is yet awkward at the trade; has no facture; is bitterly conscious of it; hates the slavery of writing; hates to give up the time when he should paint; but the one brings in something, the other nix; and I think it a good work to encourage him on. A little while ago Henley and I remarked about Bob, 'how strange it was that the cleverest man we knew should be starving.' That was where it was. So please avoid chaff on that same subject."

Needless to say that "chaff" was avoided after that; and the occasion soon permitting, and my conscience approving highly of even his earliest articles, I was able to join in the "conspiracy" which had, as an ultimate result, a work of almost equal merit, if of less volume, to that of Fromentin; for I know that I have the concurrence of far abler judgment than mine in giving the "Art of Velasquez" a high place in contemporary criticism of art.

This was not to be at once, however, and in the earlier days the hatred of the imposed *métier* weighed heavily upon Bob; and later Henley described, Bob confirming his friend's recital, somewhat ruefully, the drastic measures taken to yoke his errant spirit to the plough. Like a school-boy, he was given a task and at his own request, locked up in a room, until he had accomplished the required amount of copy. He would demand release from time to time, but the conspirators were firm, and, despite all pleading that what was asked from him was beyond the power of man, were deaf to all entreaty until the prisoner signified that the revolting task was done; when, the door opened, he would be seen surrounded by a litter of spoiled sheets and a few blotted pages, which the critical jailers read and marked with their approval.

This jack of all arts was master in several, and some of his first work was in the service of the "Saturday Review," as musical critic. His capacity for this responsible function shows the innate modesty of the man; for until that time, with all our intimacy, I ignored completely that he knew aught of music. Later, one night in London, where in company with some professional musicians, I heard his brilliant flow of talk, interspersed with the use of the technical terms and the weighing of the nice distinctions of an art unfamiliar to me, but listened to with evident approval by his more savant auditors, I marvelled at his various gifts.

Not from these two alone did trans-Atlantic messages come; messages of cheer, for until the end of my novitiate there was little of import in my work, or in

my circumstances, that was cheerful; nothing but the steady and persistent faith in the future of our art, which was shown in a thousand small instances, none of them important, but all hope-inspiring; and, since I do not wish to exaggerate the trials that befell me, the presence of friends about me here, and their measure of confidence in my future, made me support the uncertainties of my present with at least outward cheerfulness and courage.

But I knew that the "pleasant actuality" enjoyed by my friends in Europe was greater than that of living under what Mr. Howells, with patient humour, recognizes as our "ideal conditions" here; and the vicarious pleasure which their letters gave was such that I regret the carelessness that allowed so many of them to disappear. It was quite by chance, and thanks to another's sense of order, that those which have escaped loss have been preserved, leaving lapses that memory regrets but cannot replenish.

From Adrien Gaudez I learned to my joy that he was happily married, and that success had knocked at his door—the door of a large and commodious studio with a miniature *logement* attached—where I was to find him a few years later, and which, later still, I saw expanded into a handsome house set in a garden, in that pleasant suburb of Paris—Neuilly. Theodore Robinson also sent information of the various activities of artistic Paris; but of all these, the most potential as a means of keeping in touch with what I have always been pleased to consider my second *patrie*, was a truly remarkable correspondence which, begun immediately after my first return from France, has never ceased.

My constant correspondent is one of my earliest friends in Paris, one whose sustained friendship has counted for much in my life, and whose name at least, for the mere pleasure of its evocation, I write here; though as we both hope, in the intervals of our meetings, to continue our interminable communications with each other, the proscription, which I have so often obeyed in these pages, forbids mention here of more than the name of Maurice Boutet de Monvel. I call our correspondence remarkable, as it certainly has been in quantity and continuance; for I believe it rare that two busy men should for more than a generation write voluminously to each other, when both and either of them are markedly deficient in the true spirit of regular correspondence; so that months often procrastinatingly elapse before a letter receives its answer.

These letters came constantly, however intermittently, in those days as—*Dieu merci!*—they still continue to come; and created for the New Yorker, busily engaged in his own unimportant artistic activities, and to some degree in those of more importance in the general art life of our city, a second though factitious Parisian existence.

Toward the end of the period before my return to Paris there resulted from my association with Stevenson a plan for a voyage down the Rhone, to be undertaken in the interests of the "Century Magazine" by Louis and myself, he as the scribe and I as the artist of the expedition. This plan was at once communicated to my friend, who received it with enthusiasm. "This is a most enchanting picture," he wrote, and then, constrained by his physical condition ("I write this from

bed, snow pouring without, and no circumstance of pleasure except your letter") follows an enumeration of the conditions of material safety and comfort under which alone he would dare confront the very possible dangers of the trip, finishing his list with: "If you are very nervous, you must recollect a bad hemorrhage is always on the cards, with the concomitants of anxiety and horror for those who are beside me. Do you blench? If so, let us say no more about it. If you are still unafraid, and the money were forthcoming, I believe the trip might do me good, and I feel sure that working together, we might produce a fine book. The Rhone is the River of Angels. I adore it; I have adored it since I was twelve and first saw it from the train." I did not blench; and then ensued a further interchange of letters which rendered the prospect more imminent. Stevenson proposed that P. G. Hamerton should join us, as he had much practical knowledge in the navigation of small vessels on the French rivers, and could supplement Stevenson's text by his greater knowledge of the country.

While this arrangement did not appear to me practicable from a literary point of view, I agreed that Hamerton's knowledge of the river would facilitate our voyage, and everything seemed most promising—when the ever-present menace that hovered over Stevenson showed its ugly face, and our voyage on the River of Angels was relegated to the realm of unrealized dreams.

As may have been gathered by passing references, the success of the narrator had not been marked. After the year with Mr. La Farge no further labour in the decorative field was found, and I had fallen back upon

illustration as a chief dependence; and there, though I managed to earn a living wage, the character of work which I found to do or that was alone entrusted to me was either not adapted to my capacity or, as was more likely, my capacity was not sufficiently pliable to bend to its requirements. At any rate I had sunk from the state of a youth of promise—as I had been considered to be upon my return home, if the flattering encomiums of the press at that time can be believed—to that of a hack-illustrator, to whom is dealt out from the art departments of the various illustrated periodicals the crumbs from the table, where the choice morsels have been shared among more favoured guests.

I was not unconscious of this; but in retrospect, and for the guidance of those who struggle in the mesh of circumstance to-day, I am equally conscious that I never ceased to have a certain confidence in my ability to do better than my utmost endeavour enabled me to do in the only class of work that came to me. A certain number of designs for stained glass seemed to prove this, and to rouse a mild enthusiasm on the part of the few comrades who still honoured me by their confidence. Of painting proper, to which I had consecrated my five years of study abroad, I produced but little; a hastily executed picture for the annual exhibition of the Society each year comprising all that I could accomplish in the continuous, half-hearted production of illustration. At intervals I besieged the architects of my acquaintance with projects of decoration; but it was to be much later—twelve years after my experience with Mr. La Farge—before I was to be so fortunate as to execute and sign a decorative work of my own.

From this not particularly hilarious condition of affairs kind Fate provided an outlet, which first came in the shape of an order for a quite ordinary illustrative drawing, given by an old established publishing house of Philadelphia. This firm had in preparation an illustrated edition of a poem of Buchanan Reid's, and the drawing that I made had the good fortune to please the publisher; sufficiently for him to offer me the opportunity of making a book for the following year, to be illustrated entirely by my drawings. This proposition I was glad to accept; but, when I made known that "Lamia" by John Keats was my choice of a poem for illustration, and when, upon this choice not meeting with favour, I obstinately refused to consider any other, the whole project was given up.

This was a severe disappointment, for the choice had been dictated by preference for this particular poem among Keats' works, as one which I was confident would afford me opportunities for imaginative work, of the kind for which I had long and in vain besought publishers. I bore my disappointment with what grace I could, and turned to other work; but I had neglected to count upon a friend at court, one who by long service in the publishing house had acquired the respect and confidence of his employers; and who—though I had met him but once—had formed so favourable an opinion of my talent, that his representation finally reversed the verdict delivered against "Lamia," with the result that he reappeared in my studio soon after, with an authorization to proceed with the project I had outlined.

The project grew; for though the original intention

on the part of the publishers was to produce a small octavo volume similar to others which at that time, in common with other publishing houses, they issued at Christmas time, to serve as holiday gifts at a small price, the work was no sooner under way than ambition on the part of the artist expanded the prospective octavo to the dimensions of a generous folio, with specially made paper, photo-gelatine reproduction of the drawings, and all the features of a handsome and costly book. Here Albert Coleman—for the name of one to whom I owe so much should figure here—did yeoman service, chiefly in my interest as it first seemed, though, as the event proved, the interest of his employers was equally well served.

It was but natural that this old and honourable house should show a certain conservatism at the outset of an enterprise which comported quite as much risk of loss as of artistic novelty, for my projected book was quite unlike any other that had issued from an American publishing house, with the possible exception of Vedder's monumental "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam." It is, however, a pleasant personal recollection to recall the gradual contagion of enthusiasm which, from Albert Coleman's arguments, largely inspired by my belief that I "could make good," spread to the powers above, so that from the beginning to the end of the work I felt the unquestioning confidence of my publishers as a welcome, though theretofore unusual, incentive to do my best. Other indications of presumable success attended the production of the forty drawings, which provide a pictorial accompaniment, rather than definitely illustrate, from the author's probable point of

view, Keats' "Lamia." The drawings begun in March were finished in October, and during that period many who had forgotten the path to my studio returned to cheer me on my way. My appreciation of their encouragement far outweighed any sum of resentment that I might have felt for their previous cessation of interest, for none had been more conscious of the obstructed path than he who had all but fallen by the way.

There were others, however, from whom encouragement had been the better part of life through all this time, and first of these was Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who, never chary of forceful and direct blame for the demerits of a comrade's work, was equally forceful and enthusiastic where his critical judgment called for praise. It is one of the greatest privileges of an artist's life to be sustained by his comrades; and I look back on that toilsome summer, when I literally worked all day and a good portion of the night, and listen in retrospect to the voices of counsel and approval that tided me over my task. The book was finally done; from cover design, through type and margin, the pages of text interspersed with my designs, to the colophon at the end, entirely my own; the best that I could do with a congenial subject; and the critical verdict was in my favour.

It brought to my publishers a sufficiently substantial reward for the unfailing support that they had accorded to my hazardous venture; to my friend Albert Coleman a welcome vindication of his confidence in an untried man—a confidence for which my gratitude has outlasted the span of his life; and to me an opportunity to do

more and better work. My first opportunity came at once by the order for another illustrated book—"The Odes and Sonnets of John Keats"—and this upon terms that permitted the execution of a long-deferred project for a return to Europe.

XXV

PARIS REVISITED

IF "the finest action is the better for a piece of purple," to quote from my favourite author, even so commonplace an event as my return to Paris, after eight years of absence, was none the worse for an accompaniment that was somewhat unusual. I approached the good city, as I had left it, by the route of Normandy. Debarking at Havre, the first week had been consecrated to the *devoirs de la famille;* but as I had brought with me some unfinished work, for whose completion my publisher at home was waiting, I left my wife to finish her visit at her parents' house in Caen, and came alone to Paris, where I could find facilities for my work. Theodore Robinson awaited me at the St. Lazare Station, and almost his first words were an admonition to hasten to place my luggage at a small hotel on Montmarte where he was stopping, for we were expected to dine with some friends of his, in the country outside of Paris. Seated once more in the familiar open carriage of Paris we bowled across the city, the well-remembered streets smiling a welcome as I passed, to the Place St. Germain des Prés. Here we dismissed the cab, and, seated on the roof of a tramway bound for Fontenay aux Roses—the very name seemed appropriate that roseate spring evening —we passed through a quarter where every street recalled some memory, out beyond the fortifications,

along the route to Chatillon, and finally arrived at the end of the tramway line. From Fontenay we proceeded on foot across fields, and as the twilight had now come, the unpretending region of market gardens and modest habitations took on a glamour which it might have lacked by day or under other circumstances. Our final destination, indeed, was a place which in former days I had studiously avoided, as a resort of shop-keeping youth, with all the false picturesqueness dear to holiday merry-makers. It was called Robinson, from its artificed resemblance to Crusoe's island; and its chief attractions to its unsophisticated frequenters were the platforms built among the branches of the trees and set with tables, where they dined.

From the time of Paul de Kock the place had been popular, and on Sundays a rabble of Parisians of the shop-keeping order enjoyed themselves after their fashion; but French art students, among whom my lot had been cast, shunned its precincts. I learned from Theodore Robinson, however, that his friends who awaited us were all Americans and, in the joy of taking up the lines of life where I had left them so long before, I was in no mood to be critical. The place is quiet enough on other than holidays and, when we made our appearance, the little company of six or eight, who were already gathered for the feast, gave the stranger a cordial reception. We had a merry evening in our tree; following the usual programme, the waiter stationed on the platform hauling from below, in a basket attached by a cord, the various services of an excellent dinner. The coloured lanterns in the boughs above us lit our table; the company was congenial; the new-

comer answered many questions about men and things in New York, and asked as many concerning Paris; and altogether the contrast from the atmosphere of unflagging effort I had left in Washington Square to the holiday air that circulated through the branches at Robinson was most welcome. We outstayed the hour of all possible trains back to Paris, and none of us cared to cross the fields back to Fontenay to take the tramway, and much less to attempt the longer journey on foot back to the city. We found, however, that we could procure a large market wagon, in which chairs were placed; and in this we journeyed homeward, making night melodious, or the contrary—by a survival of student customs which I noted with pleasure—with the songs we sung by the way. We entered Paris by the porte de Chatillon and, following the Avenue d'Orléans, past the lion of Belfort, which commemorates the unvanquished stronghold at the gate of the lost Alsace, we came out on the place de l'Observatoire.

Here before us glared the lights of the Bal Bullier, and the music of the dances was wafted over the wall of its garden. Thoughts of the end of my first day with Louis Stevenson came back to me, and I proposed that we should dismiss our chariot and enter the ball.

Upon occasions my student friends and I had found the Bullier amusing—though far more rarely than the desperate scalawag who figures the traditional student to the popular mind should have done to fulfil the rôle thus imposed upon him; but this evening the riotous scene struck me as being tawdry and the merry-making made to order. I had entered, to be sure, as a mere spectator, where in other days I had been to a mild

extent an actor in the comedy; but if the rouge and tinsel had been less perceptible then, at close range, than it was now glaringly visible, I must have been strangely blinded. It was true that I had suffered the fatigues of a day-long journey, followed by an evening where the pleasures were a trifle exacting; and then—the thought came suddenly—for me, too, the "fatal Thirty" had struck some three years before! Finally, postponing the solution of this important social-psychologic problem to a more propitious moment, my companions plainly yawning, we left the ball, went out into the clear night—and so to bed.

The next day before noon I was in temporary possession of a studio in the Montparnasse quarter, whose usual occupant was in the country, and was at work upon the unfinished drawing which I had brought with me. There are periods in the artist's work which demand the most tense application of mind and hand, and there are other phases of its progression when it becomes semi-mechanical, and the mind may follow any of the chance by-paths of reflection. It was in this latter mood that my mind went back to the problem of the evening before, and I realized that, for the first time in my fairly long experience of the city, I had seen the side of Paris which the average stranger sees and somewhat with the eyes of the tourist. This during the summer that followed and on subsequent visits has become more plainly visible, and I thank the Fates for the good fortune to have first known Paris under another—and its truer—aspect.

With all allowances for the common change in the point of view that comes with middle-age, no one who

knew Paris thirty years ago will deny that, in the flaunting outward aspect of certain alleged "attractions," the capital, realizing their market value, and with typical thriftiness desiring to add to the hoard in the long stocking, has become far more sophisticated than in the earlier time. The beast with the raucous voice, whispering in your ear, in a tongue too fluently your own for your disgust to disown him as a possible compatriot, who encumbers the boulevards with his suggestive offer to "show you Paris," may have existed then, but he was encountered less frequently. Books of a character that in my boyhood enjoyed only a restricted circulation in select schools, not "impudently French," but *printed in English*, for the probable uses of some other nationality than that of native Parisians, now openly proclaim their impudicity in the shop-windows along the rue de Rivoli where decency reigned thirty years ago. *Autre temps, autre mœurs*, less sufficiently explains this patent appeal than the influx of foreign visitors to Paris, which has increased annually for the past thirty years. I wonder if other foreigners, if Germans, Italians, Russians, or Japanese, find these dainty dishes, sizzling hot, offered for their delectation on their arrival in the beautiful city; or whether they are reserved for those who speak the English tongue? Like most other commodities, they are doubtless governed by the law of demand and supply, and here—though no word of excuse is offered for the purveyor—have we not a certain responsibility to bear? What does the very name of Paris mean to the man on the street, nay, to the man in our clubs, to the larger portion of our press, and—more's the pity—

to so many of our "plain people," instructed by clergy, who so thoughtlessly couple its name with those of the Biblical cities of corruption? This is not the city where our "good Americans go when they die," but rather one sought by those of another temper who, living, comport themselves there as their hypocrisy, and certain societies for the suppression of such as they, do not permit them to behave at home.

This is not the Paris that its true lovers know; the Paris that teaches and writes, that paints and carves—to whom no exercise of the intellect is unknown; whose twenty thousand students in the time of Philip Augustus marked only the beginning of the vast beneficence; that, searching thoroughly, thinking deeply, and expressing clearly, has never ceased the diffusion of its spiritual message to the world.

These thoughts have been expressed a thousand times, and are common to all those who have entered the inner sanctuary of their beloved city; but they cannot be said too often for the benefit of the irreverent tourist, in whose shape I had unthinkingly penetrated the mazes of the Bullier; and for the correction of whose perverted point of view these reflections came as I worked on my drawing, in the little studio in the rue des Fourneaux, the days following my second arrival in Paris.

I had purposely waited the completion of this work and the arrival of my wife from Normandy before announcing our coming to my Parisian friends. Even the chief of these, *mon vieux* Gaudez, had no inkling of my return; so, filled with the hope of enjoying a pleasant surprise, I set out for Neuilly early one morn-

ing. The part of Neuilly where my friend dwelt is a portion of the park formerly surrounding a château of Louis Philippe, a place of broad avenues, handsome trees, and trim villas, each set back from the street in pleasant surroundings of shrubs and flowers.

It is a suburb where many artists live, in order to profit by spacious studios and better light and air than in the adjacent city; and it was here that, ringing at the gate on the Boulevard d'Argenson, I expected to find my Gaudez.

But the servant who appeared told me that her master was absent for the day, adding, as she saw my disappointment, that Madame was at home and I could deliver my message to her. When I was ushered into the presence of this lady, whom I had never met, I began an explanation that I had come from far and was an old friend of her husband—but she fairly interrupted me, saying, "but then, you must be *l'ami Vill?*" I must here explain that, I having a given and a surname, one of which begins and the other finishes by a letter which is absent from the French alphabet, my full name has ever been a stumbling-block for my friends of that nationality. Variations as great as Monsieur Houil or Monsieur de l'Eau have been played on their original themes, and distinctions between them were seldom observed; so, reassured by the endearing qualification, I answered that I was indeed the friend whose name and person were thus remembered.

After the expression of her disappointment that her husband was not at home to welcome me, Madame Gaudez gave me directions by which I could find him in the city. Gaudez had been charged with the res-

toration of the sculpture decorating the Porte St. Denis, the familiar monument at the junction of the Boulevards Bonne-Nouvelle and St. Denis on the line of the *grands boulevards* in the centre of Paris; and there I was assured that I could find him at work with his assistants. Making an appointment for that evening, to dine at a restaurant where the two friends and their wives—who were destined to enter at once into the same category—might talk over old pleasures and plan for new ones, I retraced my steps toward the scene of Gaudez's labours.

From the *impériale* of the omnibus I saw, as I approached it, the construction in wood which covered and concealed the massive proportions of the Porte St. Denis; and I had hardly the time to reflect, as Sterne had once before me, on the wise ordering of many things in France, by one of which the city fathers of Paris protect both the workers and the people in the streets by thus substantially screening work necessarily done along the line of travel, when the omnibus left me at the foot of the screened scaffolding. Here I found a door, and convincing the guardian that I had business with M. Gaudez, I climbed the stairs.

Emerging on the platform at the top I saw my old friend, his back turned to me, engaged in earnest conversation with a gentleman whose high hat and frock-coat decorated with the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour lent him the air of an official personage. Nearer at hand stood a young American friend, then a pupil and assistant of Gaudez but now well known as a sculptor, Paul Bartlett. Him I had seen some months before in New York, and, though his surprise was great,

his recognition was instantaneous. I was told that the gentleman in conversation with Gaudez was the city architect, and so I waited until my friend would be at leisure. Meanwhile Bartlett and I conversed in English, until, as the architect left my friend and descended the stairway on the other side of the platform, Gaudez gave a careless glance over his shoulder and then turned to his work. During my eight years of absence I had greatly changed in appearance, and that and the conversation in English, made him take me for some acquaintance of his pupil.

Here was the chance for my surprise. I stepped forward to where Gaudez was skilfully repairing the nose of a colossal lady in stone, and, in a tone of reproach, said: "Is this the way you treat a friend who returns after eight years of absence?" It was fortunate that the platform at the height where we stood was well enclosed, for my friend was fairly staggered as he recognized my voice. Dropping his tools, with a cry he turned, threw his arms about me, and how—when—where—is it possible—do you drop from the moon?—*Mon Dieu, comme je suis contente de te voir!* came in succession as he essayed to voice his surprise.

When some of the first questions were answered, and partial calm was restored, Gaudez told me that others of my former comrades were engaged in the work with him, and going to a small window he called across to the opposite wing of the arch, where another screen and another platform had been built to allow a free passageway under the arch. When he had made known the astounding news of my return, Osbach and Steiner, two former members of our "bande," lost no time in making

their way to join us. High above the boulevard, above the noise of its incessant traffic, in the presence of the allegorical ladies in stone who commemorate the conquest of the Rhine by Louis XIV, in sixteen hundred and something, but who beamed no less approvingly on this foreign invasion in eighteen hundred and eighty-six, the newcomer was left in no doubt as to his welcome.

An adjournment to a near-by café was next in order, and, without waiting to change their working clothes, my friends followed me to the boulevard, where, seated at a table on the sidewalk, after the manner of Paris, their rough attire excited no comment from their conventionally dressed neighbours, which is also after the manner of Paris. Here we had much to say to each other, but before long Gaudez exclaimed, "But you must meet my wife, and soon." "Yes," I replied calmly, "I will. She is to dine with me this evening; and with you and Mrs. Low we will form a *partie carêe*." And then, enjoying his further surprise, I told him of my morning pilgrimage to Neuilly; for up to that time he had never questioned how I had happened to seek him out on the top of his monument, and the arrangement I had made by which we were all to dine together. Work was no more to be thought of that day, and Gaudez and I returned to the hotel where we were stopping and, his spouse soon making her appearance, presentations were soon over and we sought a favourite restaurant of our earlier days. The dinner was prolonged—how many such feasts of friendship and flows of talk have I already enregistered?—and the question came up as to our immediate future plans.

I was somewhat undecided. The work I had to do called for a settled place of habitation and a studio in a locality where I could procure models in considerable variety, which precluded a return to Barbizon or Montigny; but on the other hand a summer shut up in the city did not appeal to me. I even had a vague notion that, after the visit to Paris, I would cross the Channel and settle down in England, near Stevenson, for the period of my stay; though there again the problem of my work interposed an objection. As I explained my indecision and my dislike of being shut in by the four walls of a studio, with no escape but the city streets, the thought of pleasant tree-shaded Neuilly came to my mind; and I asked my friends if they knew of a studio and lodging in their neighbourhood which could be leased for the summer.

They knew of none, and we began to plan a return to Barbizon and compute the cost of importing models as they were needed, when Gaudez said suddenly—with a self-condemnatory reference for not having thought of it at once—"Why, I have the very thing, the Bergerat house."

Then he described it. The house of one of his intimates, who is still well-known as an art critic and dramatist, in a little street back of the Avenue de Villiers, near the fortifications in the quarter of the Ternes, and consequently not far from Neuilly. The house was of the detached order—The "*petit hôtel, entre cour et jardin*," one sees mentioned so often in the real-estate advertisements of the Paris papers—having a walled court in front and a garden in the rear, which in this instance contained a studio, for the lady

of the house, it appeared, was an artist. The occupants were away for the summer at a country seat they had somewhere on the coast in Brittany, and the key had been left with our friends, in order that they might send to have the house aired from time to time, and look after it generally. The further description which my friend gave, and the assurance that in all probability we could secure it for the summer served to make us anxious to inspect the house, for it seemed in all points to provide for our necessities; having a studio and a garden and being in the city yet within a few minutes' walk of the open country, thus combining the advantages of the two situations.

Before we separated it was decided that on the morrow we would see the house, in company with our friends, and with the hope that we might settle for the summer in Paris we bade each other good-night.

Early the next day we stood before the house in a street so quiet and provincial that we might have been miles away instead of being in close proximity to the Avenue de Villiers, an avenue that is almost fashionable, and that leads to the very centre of Paris.

The house itself was a modest building of two stories, built in the symmetrical fashion of the small pavilion of the time of Louis XVI—the kitchen and dining-room on one side of the central hall, the other side occupied by a long *salon*, while above were four sleeping rooms.

But on entering it was the jewels rather than the casket that engaged our attention. For its contents were those of a small museum. The occupant was, as I have said, an art critic, and in *tout bien, toute honneur*, in France it is the custom for an artist to acknowledge

a laudatory critical notice of his works by the present of a sketch or some specimen of the work praised. Therefore these testimonials of gratitude covered the walls and were signed by many of the most noted names in France. In only one or two instances were they important examples; but to an artist these studies and drawings possessed a charm as great as more finished work. I shall not attempt to catalogue the collection, which I was privileged to study for five months; but here were superb drawings by Paul Baudry, Puvis de Chavannes, and Delaunay; a pen-and-ink sketch by Alma Tadema; one of the most flower-like and beautiful works—a pastel—by Renoir that I have ever seen; a sketch by Manet, and a marine view by Claude Monet, to name but a few. The bust of Victor Hugo by Rodin occupied a position of honour in the *salon*, and several replicas in plaster of his smaller works represented sculpture. The furnishings of the house showed the taste of the occupants; good old cabinets, tables and chairs of the Louis XV type predominating; while some excellent tapestry adorned the *salon*, almost the only modern object being a grand piano of Erard's fabrication. There were books everywhere; not only in a large library, which formed the first story of the detached studio at the garden-end, but the house contained a precious assortment of first editions and dedicated volumes, covering a wide range of French literature; for the critic was the son-in-law of Théophile Gautier, and had inherited many of his books, in addition to those which had come to him in the course of his own professional life.

The garden was of no great extent, a simple square of

grass and shrubbery; but it was shaded by the trees of an adjoining property which was of larger proportion; a small private park such as there are many hidden behind stone and mortar in the Paris streets; and, in addition to the fairly commodious studio, it afforded in its walled seclusion an excellent place for work out of doors.

I had been building castles in Spain all my life, and had been lucky enough to inhabit one or two; but, when after the brief delay of an exchange of letters, the keys of this pretty place were handed over to us, under the terms of an agreement suited to our extremely moderate financial resources, the reality of these legendary edifices—which I had never permitted myself to doubt—seemed doubly true.

The "domestic problem," which in truth seems to vex our Paris friends beyond measure, is, in comparison with our home production of the same vexed question, easy of solution to a philosophic mind schooled in the domestic adversities of New York; so that we very shortly procured an efficient servant, slightly afflicted with kleptomania and mendacity, but possessing a thorough knowledge of her trade; and having a roof-tree and the commissariat provided, what is more natural than to share these blessings with one's friends?

XXVI

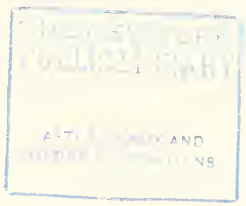
12 RUE VERNIER

IN truth the little house at the above number was seldom without guests that summer, and though the days were devoted to sedulous and pleasant industry, at night the roof echoed the friendly hum of talk.

Not so often the roof, however, as the star-studded arch of the sky and the tapestry of the trees in the neighbouring garden, for, following the customs of the country, we scorned to stay indoors when the weather permitted us to dine in the open air. An iron garden-table stood permanently out-of-doors, and there we gathered our friends about us—old friends in renewal of our past sundered relations and new ones that, it appeared, we had somehow missed up to that time.

We had hardly unpacked our trunks, in our new quarters, before Theodore Robinson had been lured from Barbizon, and had been adopted as a quasi-permanent member of the household. The qualification is necessary, for with his independence nothing more was possible. In the morning, over coffee, he would quietly remark that he would be gone for a few days; and he would thus, with characteristic quietness, slip out of our common life for a time; going, no doubt, to Barbizon, Grez, or some haunt along the Seine—for Giverny was of later discovery with him—and then slip back into his place at the table as quietly as before.

In the garden at 12 Rue Vernier, Paris



This his friends humoured, as they had learned to do years before, and as they continued to do in after years, when a ring at the bell might mean his unannounced return from Europe; or, after a winter in New York, his announcement, "I think I'll sail to-morrow" would be made in much the same tone as his (more frequent) remark, "If you are not expecting guests, I think I'll stay to dinner."

But we were always glad to have him at any time on any terms, and his presence added greatly to the crowning event of the summer when, after the hesitation due to his state of health and braving the dangers that menaced his slightest journey, Louis Stevenson and his wife decided to accept the pressing invitation that their friends in Paris had hastened to make, as a preceding and alternative project to their own visit to Skerryvore. July, meanwhile, had lengthened to August, when one morning there came, dated from the British Museum, or rather, and as usual, *not* dated, though the postmark fixes the day as the 10th of August, 1886, a line that was equally and characteristically vague:

"We look to arrive in Paris Monday or Friday: till when, R. L. S."

As this afforded no satisfactory clew to time or place of arrival, we simply awaited their coming, when a note came from W. E. Henley, whom I then only knew by name, that was more explicit. It appeared that Henley was in Paris for a time, and that Stevenson had promised to spend a night at the hotel where he was stopping before coming to the rue Vernier, that our friends would arrive the following day, and that our first opportunity of seeing them would be by coming to

the hotel. Consequently the next evening we hastened to the Hotel Jacob, rue Jacob, where I found my old friends—and the Henleys, with whom, as in honour bound, we at once swore alliance—comfortably housed.

As we entered the room Louis came forward, moving swiftly with the lightness that was peculiar to him, that was devoid of any appearance of haste; a gait entirely his own, that kept him constantly in motion without suggestion of restlessness; a quality of movement not unlike his speech, flowing swiftly yet measuredly. If, accepting Anglo-Saxon customs, our greeting was less demonstrative in word and action than many in which I had shared with my Gallic friends in the preceding weeks, it was no less heart-felt.

To my great joy the appearance of my friend had hardly changed. The flush of his cheek, always and at all times richly coloured, with a complexion more typical of Italy than Scotland, though there was nothing of the olive tone in the deep ruddiness of his tint, was as I remembered him. He was still "unspeakably slight" as in the earlier time, hardly more so; and of the two I, who had shared this quality when he had last seen me, was by far the most changed.

Everything conspired that evening to wipe away the eight intervening years and their many changeful events that had elapsed since we had bade each other adieu in the parc Monceau. Henley, who in after years I have known in moods of cynical bitterness, was this evening, and during the rest of his stay in Paris, as blithe as a great overgrown school-boy on a holiday jaunt. He played the host within the limits of his *chambre meublée* with the genial largeness which became

him so well, for he was ever a most hospitable soul. His great physical stature, his kindly eyes, in which proud self-reliance and a generous choler were latent also, though dormant for the moment, his resonant voice and ruddy viking type were strangely attractive, giving the impression of one born to command, a man of action cruelly fettered by his lameness. In the meeting of the two old friends he took an approving interest, devoid of jealousy or patronage, with a kindly paternal air, as who should say: "I am glad to have brought this about. Bless you, my children, be happy!"

To add to this sense of the renewal of the time of our youth, it chanced that Henley had a brother-in-law, living in the quarter and following the study of art, who, in honour of the occasion, had sought out and brought to this meeting three or four men of our student days, who still lingered in Paris. These were ostensible students who, in a manner not unusual in this city of study, where there is no limitation to the age of the student or the duration of the anticipatory stage to the real activities of life, had remained, liking the profit and the kind of life of this Forest of Arden, in which we, too, had dwelt. They had been mere acquaintances in the past, as they now traversed the scene for a moment to vanish once more; but their presence in the chorus lent reality to our comedy of looking backwards. One of them, in point of fact, had known R. L. S. so little in the past that, challenged to guess his identity, he, with much show of confidence, declared that he must be one who had been an innocent "duffer"—the butt of the quarter in the old time—and Stevenson's momentary discomfiture, as he

gasped, "Oh, no, surely not he," added greatly to our gayety.

As a sequel to this happy meeting our friends were on the morrow lodged under our roof. The Henleys meanwhile remained in Paris, and were with us frequently.

At one of our dinners an incident occurred which, as a salutary correction to the manner in which the chronicler has on a number of occasions played the *beau rôle* in this narrative, my regard for veracity obliges me to relate. We were numerous at table: Louis and his wife, Henley, his brother-in-law and their wives, Robinson, and ourselves. Our talk had drifted to the consideration of the peculiar qualities of American humour. Both through his marriage and his frequentation of all classes of people in California, Louis had a high appreciation and a subtle understanding of our national form of humour; and he proceeded to tell, for the benefit of our British friends, the well-known tale of the mongoos, that was being conveyed to a supposititious brother, in order that, according to the nature of the animal, it might devour the supposititious snakes that had been engendered in the brain of the supposititious brother. He had reached the climax, "This ain't no real mongoos, neither," when, ill-inspired, I endeavoured to cap his story with another of like quality.

This also has acquired a deserved reputation for its typical character—as well as a certain flavour of antiquity—but twenty years ago it was less well known. I had heard it first in New York when a visitor at the Tile Club, that short-lived organization of which all

its former members—and many who were only occasional guests—deplore the demise; and had heard it, moreover, from the lips of its godfather, if, indeed, he is not its natural progenitor, that versatile gentleman who in those days was an industrious tiler in addition to his activities as author, painter, and sea-wall contractor—in two of which varied occupations he is still, fortunately, busied.

It is the tale of the mate of a whaler, out of Nantucket, who sights "a snorter and a blower," and excitedly seeks his captain for permission to "lower" and give chase; to which his phlegmatic superior, not denying that "she *may* be a snorter and a blower," responds, "but I don't see fitten for you to lower." With the cetacean still in the offing, the mate again goes below to the captain, who, this time, in response to the fervent plea, pleasantly remarks that "*if* she's a snorter and a blower, Mr. Macy, you may lower, and be —— —— —— to you!" Thus far I had proceeded glibly, but, at this point, it suddenly occurred to me that "our army in Flanders" were babes-in-arms in comparison with Capting Coffin and Mr. Macy—and there were ladies present.

Now in the pursuit of artistic verity I would not strain at a gnat, nor even a camel; and from two of these ladies I was reasonably sure of the large toleration that the quest of the fitting word, or the exact value of tone and colour, often demands from the long-suffering spouses of the writer or painter. The two other ladies, however, were comparative strangers; they were Scotch also, and—incongruous as the momentary thought seems now in the light of further

acquaintance—no exactness of presentation might, possibly, pardon the considerable quantity of profanity, paradoxically contrasted to the most studied politeness, on which the whole structure of this particular story reposes.

Therefore I hesitated—and was lost. Stevenson, a most exacting critic of form, caught the waver in my voice, and, holding up a warning finger, cried, "Stop!" Then turning to where Theodore Robinson sat, he said, "Do you know that story?" and upon Robinson's nodded affirmative, he settled back in his chair, with a sidewise look of scorn for his host, saying: "Then be so kind as to tell it in a proper manner."

As I have said, I have heard this story supremely well told, but never so well as that time. The contrast between the calm, dispassionate delivery in the husky voice, hardly more than a whisper, with only the gleam of his expressive eyes to temper the implacable impartiality with which Robinson gave the variations between the strong vernacular of the seafaring men, and the nice differentiation of rank and character of each of them, was delightful. He went on to tell of the triumphant return of the mate with the captured whale, the captain's change of tone as he greeted the victor as "a scholard and a gentleman," with "here's your whiskey and here's your seegars," and the noble reply of the mate: "Capting Coffin, I don't want your whiskey, nor no more your seegars. All I want is si-vility, and that of the commonest —— —— sort!"

I have often thought of Robinson's simple and straightforward rendition of this story as being strangely identical with the best expression of his art: a direct

attack, the main foundation firmly established, the difficult passages met and lightly indicated, rather than painstakingly rendered, and the whole carried to completion, with every part kept in the nicest balance, without faltering or the slightest sign of the means used to obtain the result. Such was the best of his painting; and this story, as it rippled from his lips, in the broken cadence of his asthmatic voice, might have been told to a convocation of the clergy, possessing a sense of humour, without offence.

In our possibly less exacting circle the story found instant favour, even the Briton and his allied Scots showing appreciation of its humour, and Louis declaring that it was positively the best American story that he had ever heard; but that the man who would maim its fair proportions, as I was about to do, was quite unfit for publication.

One trait of British insularity on the part of Henley amused his American friends greatly, when one day he paused before a proof of Henri Lefort's fine etching of George Washington from Stuart's well-known original, which hung in the hallway of the house, with the remark, "That's a fine head. Who is it?" Suspecting an intentional assumption of ignorance on his part, I answered, with the voice of our national bird, "Well, if you don't know who that is, you'd better ask George the Third," only to be met by a stare of honest perplexity. Explanations following, it appeared that this man of wide knowledge had somehow never seen, or had failed to retain in his memory, any image of the much be-pictured father of our country.

It was through Henley that Stevenson, and incident-

ally Robinson and I, met Rodin. As the editor of the "Magazine of Art," Henley had endeavoured, as he expressed it, "to cram down the throats" of his subscribers some appreciation of the great French sculptor. It was a task foredoomed to failure, for the whole character of the respectable periodical whose fortunes he directed was essentially popular and middle-class; and Henley had many tales of indignant protests from his scandalized readers, in whose views the publisher and the counting-house coincided so thoroughly that eventually the editorial advocacy of this and congenial forms of art brought about a rupture of their relations. The gallant campaign conducted by Henley had excited the gratitude of Rodin, however, and in return he had offered to model the bust of his protagonist; part of whose errand to Paris was to profit by this opportunity to secure so notable a portrait.

I had heard much of Rodin from those who knew him well, and for certain examples of his work my admiration placed him at the head of living sculptors. Though during a fortnight or more I saw him under circumstances of the frankest and freest intercourse, I have never since availed myself of the opportunity of seeking to know him better, though this abstention is due only to his environment and does not lessen the interest which the man himself excites. He was then, and I believe that he is still, surrounded by a circle of worshipping admirers, whose homage he accepts, quite possibly, with sympathetic gratitude, finding in it an incentive to renewed effort. Quite as possibly, however, I fancied that the sculptor listened to much of this adulation, more especially that which invested certain

of his direct and simple works with intentions that were more or less recondite, with a puzzled air; willing perhaps to believe that, in his desire to render his large impression of nature to the last degree of subtle observation, he had, unwittingly, endowed his work with these abstruse qualities. The oft-quoted saying of J. M. W. Turner, apropos of Ruskin: "that a young fellow down at Oxford had found in his work a lot of things that he did not know that he had put there," came to my mind, as I listened to certain rhapsodies, which the sculptor received with an air which might have been that of a prophet in communion with his adepts.

I venture these observations with a full appreciation of their necessarily superficial character in so far as they are the result of personal contact with one who is, from whatever point of view he may be considered, among the greatest artists of modern times.

Though in company with Henley we breathed to some extent this atmosphere of perpetual incense that enveloped the sculptor even at that time, and which has grown thicker and more impenetrable since that day, we added but little to its volume; nor, in justice to M. Rodin, were we made to feel that it was expected or would be welcome.

We brought a tribute of hearty admiration of a more reasoned order at least, and, with the fraternity which exists from the highest to the lowest in art, the great sculptor welcomed us upon flattering terms of equality of purpose.

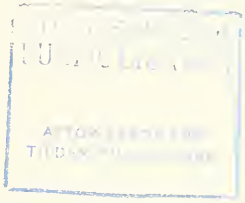
Henley's bust grew and was finished during this period, and the result, which can be studied here, was a noble presentation of the man. It is perhaps a trifle

Gallic in the poise of the head, and thus misses somewhat the essential British character of the model; but otherwise it is both truthful to the actual form and masterly in its direct and forceful modelling. On different occasions Stevenson and I were present at the sittings for the bust, and, as Rodin would pause in his work, his carefully considered and slowly uttered contribution to the more sprightly conversation of Henley and Stevenson gave me an impression that I had frequently experienced in talks with the peasants. Millet had retained to some degree this sense of the cautious use of the spoken word, and it is typical of the peasant class, who are not prodigal of expression, and prefer to wait until their interlocutor has said his last word and placed them in full possession of the matter under consideration before they venture a reply. Rodin is, I believe, like Millet, a Norman, by descent at least, and in the presence of such spendthrifts in utterance as Stevenson and Henley, with thought succeeding thought, parturition succeeding conception without interval, it was amusing to watch the unwonted mental alertness forced upon him.

This was less marked during the course of a long *déjeuner*, shared by Rodin, Stevenson, Henley and me, at Henley's invitation. This feast took place at the restaurant Lapérouse on the Quai des Grands-Augustins, a resort beloved of Voltaire and his associates, near the Palais de Justice, which has retained the patronage of the robe and gown, and which, even to-day, has not been quite modernized out of existence—or out of excellence. In the low *entresol* looking out over the river we inflicted our dilatory method of

William Ernest Henley

From the bust by Auguste Rodin



dining, and our prolixity of conversational habit upon our distinguished sculptor. He seemed nothing loth, and under the influence of our joint loquacity, tempered by earnestness and a sense of appreciation of the worth of our guest, much of his cautious reserve vanished. He spoke of his early struggles, of his journeyman-decorator's work in Belgium, of his employment as an assistant for Carrier-Bélleuse (for whose talent he evinced great admiration, saying regretfully that he was "*un grand sculpteur manqué*" by over-facility and the demands of a disordered life); and finally, upon my recital of the scene at the Salon, where Gaudez rescued his "Bronze Age" from its disadvantageous position, as I have already described, he quite won my heart by saying, "that is quite in his character," "*Il est bon garçon, bon camarade, et bon sculpteur—notre ami Gaudez.*" At last Rodin arose, apologizing for leaving so pleasant a company, but explaining that he had a sitter coming at two o'clock, and that he must get to his work. One of us took out his watch and silently pointed to the hour of five which its dial marked, at which the sculptor threw up his hands in comic dismay. Calling for pen and paper he wrote a brief note to placate the disappointed sitter, and then, before separating our various ways, we all walked down the quai and stood for a time on the Bridge of Arts—where two of us recalled our previous station there on the day of our first meeting.

XXVII

PLEASANT DAYS IN THE RUE VERNIER

EVEN as the ancients conducted their feasts under the shadow of *memento mori*, our little circle showed little outward concern for the precarious state of health of its most cherished member. Yet this thought lurked near us, and more than once have I seen Stevenson rise so quietly as not to attract the attention of others and slip out of our gay company, carrying his handkerchief to his lips as he left the room, in prevision of a hemorrhage. Fortunately, these were always false alarms, and two minutes after, respited and apparently forgetful, his voice would rejoin the chorus of discussion or story.

In our journeys around the city, the easy-going open carriages of Paris permitted us to cover a wide range within the city walls. I was always careful to instruct the driver to take a roundabout course, so that we might follow the asphalted streets, for it was feared that the jolting over uneven pavements might wake the sleeping enemy; yet, with this impending danger never absent, my friend contrived to be cheerful, and I could but imitate his example. The gallant recklessness with which he ever played the game of life was often brought into play in these rides. On entering the carriage he would say: "Now you must do all the talking; that is the only condition under which I am allowed to go out this morning." Perhaps for three minutes he would

be silent, and then speaking, he would be reminded of this condition. Another momentary silence, another infringement of the rule; this repeated perhaps once or twice more; and finally declaration that life was not tenable under such conditions, and the floodgates of talk would be loosed—never, fortunately, with ill results.

This skirting the edge of danger lent a peculiar zest to our rides through the beautiful city in the pleasant sunshine, which was clement to him during all the stay in Paris, that was destined to be his last sojourn there, though we did not think of this at the time. "You must be 'a chronic sickist' to appreciate all the fun I am getting out of this," he said, as we rolled along a tree-lined boulevard. Every sight of the streets pleased him, above all, the trim *Parisiennes*, grand ladies in fine equipages on the Champs Élysées, or, more often, bareheaded working girls tripping along on their way to their shops. "We can beat them in the way of men, I think," was one of his comments, "but the Lord was on His mettle when He made the French woman. In America and England, at their best, they're often angels and goddesses, but here they're real women."

Our destination one day was the book-shop of Calmann-Levy, the publishers of a translation of my friend's "New Arabian Nights," which he wished to procure for presentation to Rodin. On our way thither we had gleefully rehearsed the comedy of the unknown author obtaining a gratuitous and unbiased opinion from the vender of his wares, but somehow it failed utterly before the polite indifference of the salesman as to the quality of his offering. When we returned to our

carriage we were quite crestfallen, and Stevenson remarked: "If I was getting any royalty from that translation, I suppose that it would have been my duty to go behind the counter, and you could have purchased the book while I could have expatiated on its merits, and between us we could have shown that young man a thing or two about dealing in literary masterpieces." We agreed that even this might have been useless, but upon our next quest we were more successful. This time we crossed the Seine to the fine old-fashioned shop of J. Hetzel & Cie, in the rue Jacob, whose imprint is to be found on all the myriad works of Jules Verne and much other literature adapted to the uses of the youth of France. This house publishes a good edition of "Treasure Island," in French, with numerous illustrations.

We entered Hetzel's together, and Stevenson elaborately described the book he desired; not being quite sure of the title, or the author's name except that it ended in son—"as so many of our English names do." But here the young man behind the counter rose to the fly in the most beautiful manner. The volume was brought at once, and the shopman turning to the preface (prepared by another hand than the author's for this edition) read how Mr. Gladstone, returning from the House of Commons late at night, had picked up the book and, despite his fatigue and the entreaties of his family that he should seek needed repose, had read persistently until the dawn of day and the end of the story. This amused me more than it did the author; for to owe a part of his first popular success to the G. O. M.—for some such incident had occurred

—was something of a trial to one who was not in sympathy with Gladstonian policies; indeed, it was about this time that he meditated signing a necessary letter to the Prime Minister as coming "from your fellow-criminal in the sight of God." Gliding over this dangerous ground, Stevenson next inquired if the moral tendencies of the work were such that it could be put into the hands of youth without danger; and was fervently reassured upon this point. Here I thought that I might take a hand, and I blandly remarked that from a particularly intimate friend, who was at the same time one of the most noted of the younger English writers, I had heard some very damaging statements concerning Stevenson's character. We had some difficulty in keeping our faces straight as the bookseller skilfully parried this thrust by saying that it was evidently hardly necessary to remind gentlemen of our literary tastes, that many authors of notoriously loose lives had written works abounding in moral qualities; and consequently that, though he did not doubt my report of Stevenson's character, he would guarantee that no trace of these regrettable defects would be found in the book.

"That's something like a salesman!" said my friend as we bore away the volume, which lies before me now, and from which I copy the charming dedication which he wrote in it the next day.

"Chère Madame Low:

"Nous allons faire quelques petites fautes de Français, n'est ce pas?—C'est convenu?—alors, me voilà content: me voilà à même de vous dire tout tranquillement

que ce que vous avez à la main est une petite bêtise assez mal écrite, assez bien traduite; et que je vous prie de l'accepter en souvenir du boulevard Montparnasse, de Montigny sur Loing et de la rue Vernier. Mille amities à vous et à Will.

"Robert Louis Stevenson.*

"Paris 12 rue Vernier
"18 *Aout* 1886."

I have before spoken of his easy and colloquial use of French, but the above happens to be the only composition, short as it is, that I know of his in that language. With the variety of dialects and accents among the natives of France, there is abundant charity for the stranger who essays to speak the language, a charity not devoid of wonder that the alien does so well; so that the most ludicrous mistakes fail to elicit the hilarity which too often greets the foreigner when he trips in English. This charity does not extend to their literature, however, where to have something to say by no means excuses a lack of art in conveying the message; or to the stage, where the slightest trace of foreign accent would preclude the most marked histrionic

* In Graham Balfour's "Life" (Vol. II, p. 24), mention is made of this dedication, and the statement at its beginning ("we are about to make some small mistakes in French") is followed by the quotation of an alleged remark of mine "as in fact he immediately proceeded to do." Is it possible that, speaking from memory, far from my books, in mid-Atlantic to be quite precise, I made so sweeping a statement? Probably I did, for I am sure of the good faith—and would not question the veracity of a lady, who at that time made some notes for the biographer's use. But, for my own confusion, I reproduce this dedication in *fac-simile;* and the whole extent of my friend's linguistic transgressions can be seen to be thus limited to small errors of omitted accents and the like. Moreover, may I say, once for all, that it is far from me—though French is almost my household language and I have a kindly prompter at my elbow—to throw stones, when another takes a fall in the gymnastics of that polite tongue; for in that respect I am abidingly conscious that my house is of glass.

Chère Madame Low,

Nous allons faire quelques petites
fautes de Français, n'est ce pas? —
C'est comme ça! — Alors, nous vivrons contents;
nous vivrons à même de vous dire tout
tranquillement que ce que nous avons
là sous est une petite bêtise assez
mal écrite, assez bien traduite; et que
nous prie de l'accepter en souvenir
de Immeuble Montsouris, de Montsouris
au Longet de la rue Vernier. Mille
amitiés à vous et à Will.

Robert Louis Stevenson

vis
12 Rue Vernier.
18 Août 1886

Facsimile of the Dedication to Mrs. Low, by Robert Louis Stevenson

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

talent from finding favour. Stevenson's own standard of style was of so exacting a nature, so much more in consonance with Gallic requirements than with those ordinarily enforced in our own tongue, that he never seriously contemplated writing in French. Often enough, however, he would use French terms, or note their exactness of definition approvingly, especially in the rich vocabulary pertaining to art or literature, and in like manner, more than once, when discussing some of his many projects for stories or essays—of which he had an inexhaustible fund—he would break off with "quite impossible in English. I wish that I could write it in French."

We were not always engaged in feasting, nor in driving around Paris, and some of the most interesting hours that we spent together were in the studio, which had windows on three sides and, lifted in the air by the library-study underneath, nestled pleasantly among the branches of the overhanging trees in the adjoining garden. Here, while I worked, Stevenson smoked his thin wisps of cigarettes, and we talked as we had under similar conditions among the trees of Fontainebleau. He was much preoccupied by a "Life of Wellington," which he had undertaken to write as one of a series of the "Lives of English Worthies," and much of his reading at that time had been in preparation for that book.

Unfortunately, it was destined to remain unwritten—from what circumstance I know not; but he was full of his subject, and his many tales of the Iron Duke made that theretofore conceived (to me) rather wooden —or iron—hero wonderfully living and human. Upon

my own art I had my friend upon a ground of disadvantage. It is curious that in his constant frequentation with painters in former years he had taken on so little tincture of their essential point of view. I would not go so far as Bob did, some time later, and say that Louis never looked at a picture or statue except from a literary point of view, for at times I have seen him deeply impressed—with Rodin's works, for instance—by an expressional quality that is so closely allied to technical efficiency that in a complete work of art the two qualities are almost interchangeable. In addition to this, his intelligence had quickly appropriated to his uses the ordinary "patter" of art terms, so that in this respect he was as well equipped as the average "art critic." But of love of form and colour, with which the painter is chiefly concerned, he had little care. His treatment of books as objects of other than literary interest partook of this indifference. Naturally he was not devoid of knowledge or taste when it was a question of type, paper, or margins, and was open to the appeal of good book-making; but he had little of the instinctive love for a fine book irrespective of its contents that characterizes the amateur, and was even occasionally guilty of tearing a volume to pieces for convenience of reference.

His mental alertness, however, often led him, in the company of his artist friends, to questions concerning the reasons for various technical expedients; and I remember, on several occasions as he watched my work that summer, instances of this. He was quite shocked for instance, when a model with dark hair was posing, to see me deliberately endow her pictured semblance

with auburn locks. "Surely you're wrong to do that," he pleaded, and my explanation that the girl's type of head suggested sufficiently the character I wished to portray, but that for a certain harmony of scheme I preferred to change the colour of her hair, as I had not found a model possessed of both qualities, only half satisfied him. On another occasion he protested that the shadows in the face and arms in another picture were much less marked than they appeared in the model; and again the fact that the model was posing in the studio light, while my picture necessitated the effect of out-of-doors and a more general diffusion of light, did not, to him, sufficiently excuse the liberties I took with the existing conditions. It was in vain that I cited similar liberties which he took in his own work; urging that the original of John Silver was only faintly recognizable in the friend, whose moral qualities he had left out when he portrayed that amazing character; for through some flaw in his perception he refused to recognize that the law of elimination of unessential details or the addition of those essential applied as much to painting as literature.

Our conversation that morning, in deference to the presence of the pretty girl who was posing, had been carried on in French; and when, in the heat of argument, Stevenson seeking, from my point of view, to retrieve his utter defeat, made the jocular assertion that, if the choice were given him, he would prefer the original to the copy I had made, the model with ready wit curtsied and smilingly responded that "it was a thousand pities that another had been before Monsieur in that choice," and, with this ally arrayed against him,

he was forced to admit that the plastic arts had the last word.

Concerning his own work, we spoke of his avoidance of the feminine element in his stories, and this was one of the times when he regretted the limitations imposed on writers in English. He went on to explain that naturally he had no desire to venture in subject or character so far as the realism popular in France at that time had gone; but he said that no sooner had his mind conceived a subject in which women entered, than the natural sequence of events and situations, which the best of women in their relations to men might find in life, seemed fraught with danger. "There is one standard imposed for the treatment of men in literature and a totally different one for women in our modern English view," he insisted; "and this false and contradictory limitation tends to produce an illogical and unreal result in the work of art."

Seraphina, in "Prince Otto," I had felt to be very real, and so I assured him, but he pronounced her "thin" to his view; rather preferring, from the point of reality, the Countess von Rosen, saying: "You see, I once knew her." This was, of course, before the days when, more daring, he drew Catriona and created a situation absolutely true to the characters concerned, that in other hands might easily have become a source of offence for the traditional "young person"—an excellent proof that no convention can stifle the work of art that inevitably blossoms when the conditions of time, place, and capacity are ripe.

XXVIII

FIN D'ÉTÉ—1886

SO passed the pleasant days in the rue Vernier. At the end of a fortnight our friends announced that they must turn their faces homeward. To this we demurred, and they agreed that Paris was most kind to Stevenson; that for years he had not been so well; that their lodging was satisfactory and the fare sufficient. "Then why go?" we urged. "Coin," was the laconic, explanatory, but unsatisfactory response. But its lack, it appeared, was indeed the root of the evil of their departure.

Now, concerning all matters of money, as any reader of the "Letters" may learn, my friend was exceedingly frank, but not often accurate. His income from his work in these years, though often calculated with a mathematical insight that would have won the admiration of Samuel Budgett, whose memory Stevenson revered, varied with each statement; and it is doubtful, as his father supplemented his earnings whenever necessary, if he ever knew the exact amount of his income. A certain state of fortune, however, can be so easily verified by a careful inspection of one's pockets, that we never doubted the accuracy of our friend's statement that the hour had struck when remunerative labour must be assumed once more, and the holiday ended.

Here, however, as the sequel will show, we were

wrong to trust our friends. Some months later, in a schedule of expenses, elaborately calculated in pounds sterling, in francs, and in dollars (for our uses in reaching Skerryvore), Stevenson discovers "for the first time a reason (frequently overlooked) for the singular costliness of travelling with your wife. Anybody would count the tickets double, but how few would have remembered—or, indeed, has any one ever remembered —to count the spontaneous lapse of coin double also?"

In this case the fault was mine in so much that, though I realized that on budgetary questions my friend was a mere babe in the wood, I forgot the historic fact that in the old story there were *two* babes in the wood. Had I but remembered, I fancy that I should have been so indiscreet as to inquire closely into the travelling fund with which my friends had left home, and demanded a strict accounting of their expenditures before reaching the rue Vernier. Since their arrival there the few purchases that they had made had, I knew, entailed no great disbursement.

There would have been ample warrant for this indiscretion, for my friends were visibly perturbed, as though hardly realizing their sudden discovery of the "spontaneous lapse of coin," and there was possibly some telepathic transference of their quandary to their hosts, for I remember distinctly that their sudden resolve to leave us had a tinge of mystery, which much familiarity with the condition that was the avowed reason of their departure, in our common experience, would hardly account for.

But it was apparently a definite condition that faced them for, at Stevenson's request, I accompanied him

to the banker who, on my different visits to Paris, has had charge of my own modest account, in order that he might draw a small draft on England to meet the expenses of his return. The next day we saw our friends depart, even more sorry to see them go than we had been glad to welcome them. It was to be a separation of but a few weeks, for in the autumn we had promised to go to Bournemouth, and the hope of a speedy reunion lightened the sadness of our farewell.

The explanation of their sudden departure, and their equally sudden discovery that they had totally exhausted their reserve for the home voyage, only came two years after by a chance remark of Stevenson's mother. It was here in New York when her son was ill and depressed. It was the time of which he wrote, concerning the work that he did then, to Sidney Colvin: "I agree with you, the lights seem a little turned down. The truth is, I was far through, and came none too soon to the South Seas, where I was to recover peace of body and mind."

We were talking, the mother and I, under the cloud of this depression, when we spoke of the visit to Paris two years before.

"Louis was so well and happy there," she said, "that it is a pity that his absurd mistake caused them to shorten their visit." The "absurd mistake" seemed hardly descriptive of the conditions that induced their departure; and, finding that I lacked the key to the mystery, the mother gave me the following explanation.

It appeared that there had been question of Louis joining his parents in Scotland in the early summer of

that year, a project which, by the advice of the doctors had been abandoned. Then had come our invitation, which the faculty favoured, and, hearing of our friends' desire to accept it, the elder Stevenson had sent his son a cheque for a hundred pounds, with the message that he was to use it on a trip to Paris. It was this not inconsiderable travelling fund which had appeared to be so suddenly exhausted, after a fortnight in Paris, where they were under no expense, except an occasional cab and some trifling outlays in the shops.

Some time after, when there appeared upon his bank book a credit of one hundred pounds in excess of the amount against which he had drawn, the father, whose business habits were somewhat more thorough than those of his son, went over the cheques returned from his bank, and found that the one sent Louis in the early summer was missing. A note of inquiry brought the answer from Louis that the whole transaction was present in his memory; that it was with this cheque that he had met the expenses of the summer trip. Further insistence on the father's part induced a thorough search among his son's papers, and there the cheque was found, *uncashed*.

Of course no sum had been mentioned in my hearing at the time, or the manifest absurdity of so great an expenditure, by such modest travellers as were our friends, would have been patent.

They had simply spent what ready money they had happened to have and, when that was exhausted, this babe in the wood—I may transgress obvious limitations, and say, these babes in the wood—had simply wondered how one hundred pounds had vanished into

thin air; and, while Stevenson was drawing upon London to pay their return passage, this cheque, beautiful and inviolate, with all its potentialities of an extended holiday, slumbered in an upper room of the little house in the rue Vernier! Had Stevenson known that he was well able to pass a month or so more with us, the relapse in his health, from which he suffered soon after his return home, might have been avoided; for the weather remained favourable in Paris and the adjacent country until late in the autumn when, following his injunction in the poem addressed to my wife in the rue Vernier, we "trimmed" our "escape from the unbeloved North" for a winter in Italy. Had he stayed on, we might even have ventured upon a return to Barbizon for a few days, in order to complete our cycle of experiences in the fortunate effort to revive the airs of our youth; and these recollections might have been greatly enriched thereby.

I have told this intimate experience in some detail, for it is such a typical and flagrant instance of the utter incapacity on the part of Louis to deal with questions of money, that it explains many entanglements in matters of business which caused him much pain and anxiety; less for the possible loss they entailed —for I know of but one where profit to himself would have ensued—than for the trouble that his lapses caused others.

The record of the summer would be incomplete without at least brief mention of our constant association with our good friend Adrien Gaudez and his wife and daughter, "la petite Adrienne" of those days, whose present command of English may, I trust, enable her

to read throughout this record a testimony of constant affection for the father.

The garden surrounding their house on the Boulevard d'Argenson was filled with field flowers, my friend having taken handfuls of the seeds of all the hardy wild flowers and scattered them broadcast upon the earth, freshly prepared, without arrangement of flower beds or walks. There they had prospered, and the garden was a tangle ablaze with colour, the pathway meandering in and out following the capricious order of their upspringing. Within the flowery space we passed many pleasant hours that summer and enjoyed many *al fresco* dinners, which the wise and witty talk of Gaudez made memorable. It was unfortunate that the time of Stevenson's visit had coincided with the absence from Paris of *la famille Gaudez* at their summer home on the seacoast, and so these two old friends did not meet, to their mutual regret. Upon their return, after the Stevensons' departure, we resumed our pleasant relations, and as our two houses were but a short distance apart, the householders saw much of each other.

The time of our visit to Skerryvore approached when a complete change in our plans was made necessary by a slight disaster, liable to occur in the most carefully planned campaign when its operation is carried on at too great a distance from the base of supplies. In early September I had dispatched, to the address of my publishers at home, a box containing all my work for the summer, consisting of drawings for the new book, the "Odes and Sonnets of John Keats." The consular certificate, necessitated by our unjustifiable and antiquated law for the protection of the American artist

(who for thirty years has been petitioning Congress to remove its heavy hand and establish free art) had been procured, insurance had been effected, and the forwarding had been entrusted to a responsible house in order to ensure safe and speedy transit for these pictures. All this precaution apparently counted for little in the struggle for supremacy with the innate depravity of inanimate objects, for no sooner had the box containing these works left my studio than, to all intents and purposes, they simply disappeared from off the face of the earth for a period of four months. Letters and cablegrams crossed the ocean, every possible means of inquiry at the point of dispatch and at their destination seemed exhausted, when, with no better excuse than that of an unjustified circular voyage from Paris to Philadelphia via Rio Janeiro, or some equally indirect South American port, they finally arrived in the hands of my publishers.

This fortunate event, for no amount of insurance would have compensated me for their loss, as I know no task more foredoomed to failure than an effort to repeat work once before conceived and executed, did not occur until January, by which time I had gone to Italy.

Meanwhile consternation reigned in the rue Vernier; the lease of the house expired on the first of October, and as the apparent loss of my work entailed delay and changes in the form of remittances on which I had counted, a journey to Skerryvore was not to be thought of, and instead—as it must have figured so often in the history of art for the past century—Barbizon offered itself as an appropriate retreat for the impecunious.

Consequently for more than a month, during which my complicated affairs were duly regulated, we were once more guests at the Hotel Siron. We had paid a brief visit to Barbizon in the spring, a mere call in passing; and though the circumstances that brought us there were for all the time of our stay perplexing and a cause for very serious anxiety, I was not sorry in another sense to renew my memories of the place. It had changed externally but little, though only one of the men of my time remained at the hotel and a few more who were still residents of the village. One of these last was my old friend Babcock who, true to his inability to realize the passage of time, called from his studio in the upper story in response to my knock at the door of his house, naming myself at the same time as had been my custom eight years before. "Oh, it's you, Mr. Low, come right up to the studio." This without the slightest inflection of surprise, though I might have dropped from the moon for all he knew. Nor, when he welcomed me cordially, in the well-remembered studio, which also showed no mark of the passage of time, was there surprise at my appearance or the slightest curiosity concerning the duration of my absence apparent in his manner. I saw my self-centred friend often during my stay in Barbizon and endeavoured to excite his interest in home affairs, but the only recollection that he had of his native land went back to 1847, and that—half shudderingly—he refused to dilate upon, save to evince a certain measure of sympathy for my unhappy lot in dwelling there.

The Millets, mother and son, still dwelt in the house where the great painter had lived and died, and with

them it was peculiarly interesting to renew acquaintance. On the morning of our first visit Madame Millet stopped before a large rose bush in the garden and, plucking one of the deep-red flowers to give my wife, told us how years before, her husband, on the return from one of his visits to Paris, had brought the tiny slip, which he had planted and tended so carefully that it flourished and was the pride of the garden. "My husband was always proud of these roses," she said, "and now when they bloom each year I recall his delight when its first flowers, 'his roses,' he called them, appeared."

A few days after François Millet asked me if I could remember a large blank canvas which had always stood against the wall of the studio in his father's time. My own recollection was not definite, but the son went on to tell me that from his earliest childhood this canvas had stood there, thickly covered over with a coat of paint of some neutral colour, and that his father had often pointed it out in jest as a warning against undue ambition.

It had happened, shortly before the fall of Louis Philippe in 1848, that Millet had received a commission from the Ministry of Fine Arts, for which he was to be paid so large a sum of money that it had appeared to him almost impossible that one of his works could be of enough value to deserve it. Two thousand francs —less than four hundred dollars—was the agreed amount, and the modest painter had procured a large canvas and began a composition of two life-sized figures, representing Hagar and Ishmael. The work progressed slowly, the over-anxious artist, intent on

giving full value for this large sum, was in doubt as to its merit when, in addition to the political troubles of the time, cholera broke out in Paris and, alarmed for the safety of his little family, Millet desired to leave the city and find a safe place of refuge in the country.

The only way apparently, of procuring the means of flight was to finish his Hagar, when some of his friends insisted that he should offer a smaller picture, already finished, in its place. The Administration of Fine Arts consented willingly to the substitution, and it was with the money received from this picture that Millet and his family sought Barbizon, to stay until order and healthful conditions were restored in Paris. That this brief stay was extended to the remainder of his life is already known. Some time after his installation in Barbizon Millet, in a moment of dissatisfaction with his nearly completed Hagar and Ishmael, covered over the canvas with a uniform tone of colour, with the intention of painting some other subject upon it; and for the rest of his life (and for ten years after his death) it stood in a corner of the studio, an object-lesson, in the painter's estimation, of the folly of undertaking too great a task.

Of this story, which I recognized as having already heard, François now reminded me, and then went on to tell me its sequel. The previous winter one of his brothers, the architect, Charles Millet, if I recollect rightly, had, while convalescing from an illness, passed some months in the old home. Looking about for something to occupy his time, he had undertaken to disinter the long-lost Hagar and Ishmael from under the surface of earth-coloured pigment which had hid-

den them like the sands of the desert for nearly forty years. It was a task requiring great patience and no little skill. But when, at the conclusion of this story, François Millet conducted me to the old studio where the recovered picture was on view, I saw that it had been accomplished most patiently and skilfully. It was an impressive picture, one for which every lover of Millet's work owes gratitude to the painter's son for the filial piety which presided over his work of restoration. In its richness of colour and the romantic type of the mother's figure there was a strong reminder of the painter's earlier manner, but there was much that gave evidence of the graver sentiment with which in later years his production was endowed. The picture was not finished, but so evenly had it apparently progressed up to the time of its relinquishment, there was a resulting unity of impression and, perhaps from its method of recovery, a suggestive charm that can so often be felt in Italy before half-faded frescoes—often like this, works which have been hidden from sight by an obliterating wash of colour, and recovered in a similar manner.

It was a strange experience to stand in the studio where, thirteen years before, I had been privileged to see the great painter for the first time, and to see this work, virtually fresh from his hand, though he had been sleeping quietly in the churchyard at Chailly for more than ten of these thirteen years. It was a fitting close to my previous memorable visits, for but a few years after, Madame Millet, through a series of unfortunate occurrences, was obliged to leave the home in which she had passed the greater part of her married

life; and the house and studio were greatly changed, and to-day possess but little of the distinctive character they retained during the residence of the painter's family.

Of other renewed memories of this sojourn I have already told in previous pages, for I made it my pleasant duty to see all my old peasant friends. At the hotel there were few changes, except that the painters who, as in my student days, were lingering before returning to Paris for the winter, held to the scene of their summer labour by the beauty of the autumnal colour, were nearly all strangers. Theodore Robinson was present, and one other, an Englishman who, from before my time, had always been looked upon as a more or less temporary guest at Siron's. He would absent himself for long periods, would be heard from as having finally settled in the South of France or elsewhere, and then would suddenly make his reappearance in Barbizon. On this visit we found him at the head of the table, announcing his final decision to roam no more. "What is the use," he asserted; "here I can sit at Siron's table in Barbizon and, sooner or later, every mortal soul that I care to see comes along. I've seen most of the things I have any interest in elsewhere, but if I want to see anything more, Barbizon is near enough the centre of Europe for me—I never want to see *your* country—and the P. L. M.* will take me anywhere." Later this typical "snoozer," as we had dubbed the contented residents of the village, built himself a handsome house in Barbizon, and there he lived—and died, as I heard only the other day.

* P. L. M., Paris, Lyons et Mediterranée—the railroad of that name.

We had elected residence in the annex to the hotel built on the opposite side of the street, where we had a room and a studio, which I had occupied in my youth, and crossed the way to the hotel for our meals. It was pleasant enough to sit under the time- and smoke-embrowned panels on the walls and be served with just about the same food, though the wine had certainly deteriorated (unless taste had changed), by the younger generation of Sirons. Of the elders, both were in evidence, the père Siron a shade more bulky, not perceptibly more ornamental, and quite as useless as in the earlier time; and his spouse, aged and with something of a shriller voice, but as capable and energetic as of yore, lamenting the slipshod manner in which her juniors, to whom she had ostensibly resigned the cares of government, conducted the hotel. As it was still impossible for me to determine whether all my summer's work was lost, I had determined to continue on my way to Italy, and, if obliged to replace it, to make an entirely new series of drawings under new influences. Meanwhile I worked on a number of decorative borders, designs for lining papers, and the like, which were to be features of my new book in any case, while waiting for the arrangement of a satisfactory financial basis on which to prosecute my work. During the beautiful autumn weather we made many excursions, through the forest and across the plain, to outlying villages; and Arbonne, with its simple but handsome church, and Fleury, with its moated château, where the cipher of the great Richelieu can still be seen worked in the ornamental iron-work on the chimneys, were again revisited.

And here, to play once more a few bars on the penny

whistle in praise of friendship, came a letter from one whose modesty I shall respect by omitting his name here. I had written home to him just before leaving Paris, describing our plans for a winter in Italy, and had added (much in the spirit of the too-good-to-be-true) half jestingly, that if he was the man I took him to be, he would pack his trunk and join us. On the whole, I was more pleased than surprised to receive a letter in return, saying that by the steamer following he would be with us; and the too-good-to-be becoming true for once, a week after he was in Barbizon.

These pleasing incidents did much to lighten the only shadows that obscured a pleasant summer, filled with the unusual experience of finding the realities of a long-anticipated attempt to renew old relations and cement them for longer duration, of deeper and truer import than their anticipation. In this frame of mind, after a farewell visit to the Château of Fontainebleau, on a day when nature was doing her best to make the forest and the park around the noble building beautiful and create a certain regret at leaving *la belle France*, we set out for Italy.

XXIX

LONDON—EN PASSANT

THE impression of a first visit to Italy, a sojourn of eight months in Florence, and the myriad sentiments evoked to one who journeyed there as to a land which, by means of every procurable photograph, book, or recital from those who had made the journey, he already knew, only to find—as all who go thither in the right spirit may also experience—that the impressions of reality are always better than those of anticipation, would fill a book. This I have no intention of writing, let me hasten to say; and the winter there, though it looms large in my private collection of pictured memories, may be passed over. Likewise, no more than mention need be made of a hurried return by an all-night journey, to go directly from the train and mingle once more in the crowd at the *vernissage* of the Salon; and a subsequent ten days of Paris in which farewells were said, and the hope expressed (and in the event realized) for a shorter interval between visits than the one drawing to a close. Our faces were turned homeward, and the deferred visit to Skerryvore was to mark the first stage of the return journey.

It had not proved possible to include Bob in the reunion of the previous summer, but, as our journey was to take us through London, we looked forward to meeting him with an eagerness which the memories of

previous years intensified, now that our desire was on the point of fulfilment.

We were newly arrived at Charing Cross and, having put up at the caravansary contiguous to the station, were removing the traces of travel when word came that Bob awaited us below. We were not long in joining our friend who, accompanied by his wife, thus took the earliest opportunity of meeting us.

There was no shock of strangeness in meeting Bob beyond that of seeing him attired as a conventional citizen of London town; I believe that he had even donned a high hat in honour of the occasion; so that within a very few minutes we were deep in a resumption of intercourse that might only have been interrupted a few hours before. Again the long alienation from a common existence threw us back upon the firm ground of our earlier friendship, and all the years of struggle to gain a place in life, under conditions that differed so greatly that one was ignorant of the detail of the other's solution of the problem, vanished and made us, grown men, each with a certain hold on our time and environment, youths once more. After our first eager exchange of inquiry and comment, the hour of dinner had arrived, and as what I presume to be the solid English comfort of the Charing Cross Hotel promised little to the newly arrived, and quite visibly held but slight appeal to our friends, we resigned ourselves to their guidance for a quiet place where we could talk while dining.

The place was found, somewhere around Leicester Square, modest, somewhat dingy, and quite appropriately French. It was our intention to stop but a

day in London and, after our visit to Skerryvore, to return for a short stay before sailing from Liverpool. But it soon transpired that our visit to Skerryvore must be given up. We learned that on the day preceding our arrival the summons—which, however prepared it may find us, always comes as a dolorous surprise—had come to Louis to hasten to Edinburgh if he would see his father alive. Louis and his wife had thus hastened northward, where the elder Stevenson, with whom all the differences of his son's youth had long given place to the most entire affection, lay dying—arriving only on the eve of his death.

Months afterward we learned that, as the guardian of her husband's health, our friend's wife had purposely avoided letting us know of their summons, in the hope that we might continue our journey to Skerryvore, and thus constitute a reason to abridge their stay in the dangerous city of Stevenson's birth. Her fears were but too well grounded, for, as no call for their return came from Bournemouth, Louis lingered too long in the house of mourning where, having caught a severe cold on his way there, and not having been allowed to be present at his father's funeral, he lay desperately ill until the end of May.

Ignoring the service that we might have rendered by continuing our journey, though doubtless Louis would not have been strong enough to return at once to Bournemouth, our plans once more fell about our ears, and with Bob we began at once to rearrange them for a longer sojourn in London.

I knew the city but little, and it was my wife's first visit there, so that we were literally in the hands of our

friends. As Charing Cross is in the centre of London, Bob declared that it was miles from every one and everywhere, and suggested an instant departure from the hotel. I had made some inquiries of Louis some time before, in view of a possible month in London, which the need of my presence in New York had made inexpedient, and had received this characteristic reply:

". . . There are piles of decent inns, and in none, I believe, does political opinion run high. Were you to stay a week or two, the cheapest way is lodgings; a man or a man and his wedded spouse can have damn bad rooms, including a private sitting-room, for a pound —5 dollars—25 francs—and the devil knows how many thalers, roubles, or doubloons—a week. In the same spot he can be supplied with inferior vittles to the tune of ditto, or say one pound (or the answerable proportion of dollars, francs, thalers, roubles, asses, lire, zwanzwigers, moidores, etc.) a week. But I don't know the reasonable inns. I will try and find out."

Viewed in the light of practical information this leaves much to be desired, and I was to find that, with many other amiable qualities which Bob shared with his cousin, he, too, was but a slender reed to lean upon in matters practical.

Had we been left to ourselves, we should have turned to Baedeker for relief, but, early the next morning, Bob appeared, accompanied by Henley, and assumed charge of the strangers within their gates. Two four-wheelers were procured, and on these our luggage was hoisted and, personally conducted by our friends, we set forth in one of the carriages, followed by the other, in quest of a place to lay our heads.

We finally landed before a small house of Henley's holding, in what I was informed was Shepherd's Bush. We had been absent from home for over a year and, though as experienced travellers we pride ourselves on journeying with but little luggage, we had for our return voyage five or six trunks. "Are those what you call 'Saratogas'?" Bob inquired dubiously, when, after creating a certain excitement in the quiet neighbourhood, they had all been deposited in Henley's front hall, which, being of small proportion, they filled most generously. "Now," he added cheerfully, "we'll find you lodgings in a jiffy." Alas, my slender reed! We would stop before a house, and Bob would opine that so-and-so lived there three years gone—but no, it was in the next square. Then we visited strange places, impossible places, while the cheerful, cosey room with the tea-kettle singing on the hob—it was May, but chilly—seemed more and more a work of English fiction. In one place the condition that the landlady's daughter should be admitted to the sitting-room two hours a day, for her piano practice, seemed reasonable to Bob; at another his effort to convince his friend, by measuring with his cane, that a bed, not much above the proportion of a coffin, was ample for two fairly portly people was more enthusiastic than persuasive.

After covering miles in this fruitless quest we returned to Henley's house, where the more capable member of my family took our guide, philosopher and friend under her direction and soon came back triumphant, having found very decent lodging in the immediate neighbourhood; a natural result, as the

perfidious Bob declared, of "knowing what you wanted when you saw it."

These lodgings were truly in the centre of things, being about midway between the apartment of Bob and the house of Henley; and the trifling disadvantage of a ten-mile ride on the Underground to reach any other object of interest, counted for little, although, after one trial of the "vittles" at our lodging, and finding that Louis' qualification was but too well justified, we were obliged to make this journey whenever we lacked an invitation to dinner. The hospitality of our friends rendered recourse to restaurants infrequent, however, and, as the lady of my family was much interested in questions of the household, the opportunity to study typical English family life was eagerly welcomed, independently of the sentimental attractions of our kind reception. A few months later, when this student of economic conditions based some general conclusions on her observations at that time, I regret to say that Louis gave way to the most unseemly hilarity at the thought of Bob or Henley in the character of the typical British householder. But, whatever these establishments may have lacked of conventionality, was more than made up by the good feeling that reigned in both, and in that of Bob especially, where a girl child, rejoicing in the name of "Pootles" radiated joy that was not less deeply felt by her parents because its appreciation was whimsical and humorous.

Superficially, Bob was somewhat changed, undoubtedly. In the earlier days he had worn his heart upon his sleeve and, in the awakening from his specu-

lative dream of life and in the assumption of its every-day responsibilities, the daws had pecked him to such purpose that much of his former buoyancy had given place to a subdued and slightly apprehensive manner.

But experience gained in rubbing against his fellow-men in the struggle for existence had left Bob, after all, less dismayed than puzzled; and, in his settled conviction, there was more of wonder at the prizes for which men fought than fear that he had missed something worth having, or regret that his share was not larger. He had always deplored ambition, holding that no man mounted higher without trampling another, perhaps as worthy and only less self-centred, under foot. Now he maintained consistently that he wisely limited his effort to the amount of work necessary to the needs of his little family, and, having in this the acquiesence of its only other member who had arrived at years of discretion, the appeals of his friends to extend his influence and achieve the position to which his talents entitled him, fell on a deaf ear. It is a notable instance of his constant depreciatory attitude to his work that, some years later, he described to me his then unpublished "Art of Velasquez," as a "little book that he had written to accompany a few reproductions of the master's pictures," conveying the impression that it was mere hack work, instead of the most illuminating insight to a painter's achievement known to English letters.

Perhaps it was simply finding him industrious "as never before," that implied a change, for to the "touch of friendship" he was as responsive as ever. Now that the barrier of the Atlantic and imposed communication

by letter was removed, he was still of all men the one to sit down with and take a discursive excursion over the territory of life. Here his talk was as pregnant as ever, parting from premises assumed or received, it mattered little which for the resulting lucidity of his deduction, and progressing easily, digressing only the degree necessary to clear all ambiguity along the way, to a conclusion that was wholly persuasive, until he would retrace his steps and temperately urge its contrary in an equally convincing manner.

This—we few who remember these gymnastics with the thrill of stiffened athletes, however timorous may have been our own performance at the dizzy heights where our agile friend conducted us, owe his memory this testimony—was entirely without pretence of making talk or talking well. In his view his were the commonplace thoughts common to all men, and, if indeed he ever considered himself as one at all apart from others, it was, we may be certain, with a measure of self-reproach that he should be voluble where others were more wisely reticent.

In lesser matters my friend was the reverse of practical, the variety of possible solutions of minor problems left him undecided and hesitating between them. His Gallic friend was an omnivorous reader of Dickens, having in her girlhood read his works in translations, and later, having acquired our tongue, remained a faithful admirer. Having a strong sense of local colour, she had been somewhat disappointed upon our arrival in London that we had not put up at some quaint inn, with a plump head-waiter and a cheery landlady. The White Hart, where Mr. Pickwick and

Sam Weller met, was probably too much to be hoped for; but to stop first at a prosaic railway hotel, and then go to lodgings, where the local colour, on close inspection, proved to be of a kind mainly removable by soap and water, was a disillusion that was saddening. In her distress she turned to Bob, and reminded him how, in the old Paris days, he had been eloquent in description of the good old English inns, of their comfort, of the huge barons of beef served on their tables, the careful inspections of the larder, and the selection of the succulent chop, that was grilled adjacent to your table and served piping hot by an obsequious but paternal waiter. All this, and more, was echoed from the past into Bob's perplexed ear, and he was commanded to produce instanter these vaunted comforts of the British Isles.

The scene was Trafalgar Square, at dusk, as we—in a manner characteristic of this narrative—were intent on dinner. The helplessness of Bob was pathetic. Yes, he was certain that there were such places; he had not imagined them; had even known them at some past time, but now—and then he apparently interrogated Nelson on his column, but that warrior was mute, and so he turned to Henley. He gave him no help, declaring that all the decent food in England was French in preparation, and that the Café Royal, or Verrey, sufficed for his wants.

I believe that we finally compromised on Simpson's in the Strand, where at least the huge roast-beef, wheeled to the table, and carved by the head-waiter, was typically English; though there Bob lamented the changes that had taken place since his youth, changes

which have been progressive, so that on our last visit to London this earlier experience seemed, in contrast to existing conditions, to be quite Pickwickian in character. In the vast city we naturally saw the sights that tourists see in company with one or the other of our friends, nearly all at least, for one of us refused to be taken to Madame Tussaud's or the Tower, so that these historic monuments are void in our memories. To another Monument we went often—though why I should couple it with Madame Tussaud's, I know not, except that Louis always called the British Museum by that name.

There are many wonderful works of art in England, but none there or elsewhere so great as the marbles from the Parthenon shown in this great Museum; and no matter how faithfully one may have studied the casts taken from them, there breathes from the gloriously tinted surfaces of these great figures the sense of a life nobler than actual existence—a life latent since the dawn of time and slumbering since the exile of the gods—of which no image or replica of these very gods gives more than a faint semblance; and, as one stands before them, their beauty fairly evokes a fear lest they should wake to put to shame our poor humanity.

An extremely pleasant encounter in London was with one of the old friends of the Paris days who, by the roundabout way of Italy, had finally settled in his native land, where his reputation as an artist is now firmly established. This friend in his very early youth had crossed the Atlantic, had drifted over much of our Western territory, and had resided in California for a

few years before seeking in Paris the solid foundation of his present achievement. These early years had strongly tinctured his character and, from the vantage of his very comfortable situation in England, he was wont to proclaim that the only life really worth living was that of a cowboy on our plains.

Our short sojourn in London was at the time of the first visit there of our eminent compatriot Buffalo Bill with his troupe, and much of our friend's time was spent in viewing the performances that brought back to his memory the life that he knew and consistently regretted. The one cloud on the horizon of our mutual pleasure in meeting once more was my total ignorance of, and possibly consequent lack of enthusiasm for, the cowboy. It fell, that in order to escape the direful Sunday of London, we had chartered in his company and with our other friends a large open wagon to convey us to Hampton Court. This was under the personal conduct of a gentleman with an extraordinary bell-crowned glazed hat, a wart on his nose, and a command of the language of the road that, so far as we could understand it, seemed calculated to win us the right of way over a coronation-coach. He was at least enough like a member of the Weller family to satisfy the love of local colour of the Dickens enthusiast, and our whole journey to Hampton Court, upon a road encumbered with countless 'Arry's and 'Arriet's, was a typical and amusing outing.

Once under the famous avenue of Bushy Park, we sacrificed to the gods of antiquity, and were not the least interested, as we were certainly not the least reverential, of all the throng of which we formed a

part. Walking in the pleasant garden my transplanted Californian of English birth grasped my arm. "There, look," he said, labouring under strong excitement; and there, in the haunts of Bluff King Harry stalked, under wide-brimmed sombreros, with leathern leggings and clanking spurs, two compatriots—two cowboys. When I had finally convinced my friend that I had been obliged to journey to these historic shades to meet my first cowboy, the scorn lavished on one who had so wilfully neglected the opportunities of his birthright, beggars description.

This was our last pleasant assembly. We returned by a devious way, stopping for the afternoon tea, which seems so natural in England and so artificial elsewhere, at a pretty inn by the way, and reaching London late and dinnerless. We were a large party, quite large enough to try the resources of a more considerable householder than Bob, but he bade us to come and try our luck. It was the maid's day out, but perhaps she had left something, and if not, we could all journey further and find sustenance elsewhere. On these conditions we invaded their small apartment, to find a table laden with a huge piece of cold roast beef, a salad likewise generous, and various accompaniments of substantial enough character to be welcome to appetites whetted by a day in the open air. Our hosts seemed as gratefully as we were agreeably surprised, and Bob and his wife expressed a warm appreciation of the character of the absent maid who, they both insisted, was alone responsible for the generous repast which, to one who knows London on Sunday, or the menace of the distance from Blythe Lane, Kensington, to a

restaurant, only problematically open on that day, took on a veritable life-saving character.

I have since realized that there were British householders more capable than some of their relatives were wont to paint them.

The next day we were joined by the friend who had passed the winter in Italy in our company, and who had lingered behind as we passed through Paris, and two days after we set our course homeward with a parting thought for Louis in the North, of sympathy for his sorrow and apprehension for the outcome of his prostration, not yet knowing that before the summer was past he would rejoin us in New York.

XXX

THE SECOND COMING OF R. L. S.

WITH all that Europe held, with all the renewed ties that were again temporarily severed, with almost the sense of stepping out of the fifteenth century, so strongly had the winter in Florence taken possession of the homecomer, the sight of New York was welcome. The spire of Trinity Church still dominated the town, for it had not in 1887 been engulfed by the skyscrapers, and the well-known landmark called him back to new labours, even as it had sent him forth in 1873 filled with hopes and ambitions.

Wyatt Eaton met us at the landing. By his kindly forethought, and his characteristic desire to serve his friends, our modest quarters on Washington Square, which we had retained during the year's absence, were prepared for our reception; and upon the plea that our welcome should not be impaired by recourse to a restaurant, he bore us away to dinner at his studio, where his talent for preparing a steak over the coals in his grate was brought into play, and where the homecomers had much to share with him in the memories of their travel. In the interval of this narrative Eaton had returned to Europe, had passed about a year at Barbizon in 1884, and the following winter in Florence. In one of his letters received when we in turn were there, I find: "You know how anxious I was to have you go to Italy; and, now that you are really there, I

feel as though some of my fond hopes were being realized, and in a certain way as if I were living over again my own life in Florence. . . . How perfect it is for you to have Faxon with you. I was in hopes that Robinson would also be of the party. I need not tell you how much I would like to be with you; but not being able to do it does not make me unhappy . . . for it will add to my pleasure in having been there when you come back, and for the rest of our lives we can talk over the treasures of Florence."

"For the rest of our lives"; alas, the earth has covered Eaton since 1896, leaving the memory of one of the most amiable and simplest souls that it has ever borne. His work, like that of so many of the men of our time, never reached its full fruition, though he was able to produce a few notable pictures, achieved at intervals when ill health and insufficient recognition permitted him a breathing space and allowed him to do his best. These few works are rightly treasured by their possessors, who in some cases have acquired them at prices which would have enabled their multiplication, had the artist received more than a tithe of the value they have attained since his death. In the latter years of his life he went to Montreal, literally driven from New York by fickle fortune; for, as I have already told, he had met with some success here for a time after his return from his studies in Europe, and from there, where he was not overfortunate, he returned in the summer of 1896, to die at Newport, R. I.

There was no forecasting of the future, however, that evening in Washington Square, nor in the days following, when life in that pleasant corner of our city was

resumed. When all the tales of travel were told, when work had been resumed, there yet remained much to think over of the happy year abroad. Indeed, experiences of after years and of acquired knowledge of the world lead me to think that I was rarely fortunate to find in every case my friends of youth improved in circumstances and in character. I had left them when all the problems, whose solution gives a man his place in the world, were undecided; and without exception fate and fortune had treated them kindly. The divinity that had shaped the course of destiny for one of them, had done so without consulting his wishes; but, though at the time we could not know that in spite of his wilful lack of ambition he would nevertheless leave a work that the most ambitious might envy, even he had found compensation outside the work he was doing for missing the more brilliant future that his friends had prophesied for him. Some such thoughts as these ran in my mind until they took the unwonted form of verse; verse which fairness to my friend, whose essay in French poetic form I have ruthlessly copied some pages back, makes it incumbent on me to include here.

TO R. A. M. S.

Of Pegasus in harness, so 'tis said,
That, when at night his weary form he laid
In close-locked stable on a straw-strewn bed,
Down a slant moonbeam came a little maid.

Close to his side she nestled, snug and warm,
His head, his mane, his pluméd wings she stroke,
With soft caress, and many a childish charm,
Her love, her faith; all lisping wise she spoke.

God-like and proud, thought he, my former state,
When through the clouds in starry-ways I strayed;
Now poor my lot and mean is mine estate:
Yet, other time lacked I this little maid.

It seems strange to exhume these lines from among my papers, where they have lain dormant these twenty years, and flaunt them for the first time before other eyes, for they were never sent to him to whom they were addressed, nor, for some curious and unusual reticence on my part, were they ever shown to Louis. I had, nevertheless, ample justification for venturing this ordeal, for one of my friend's whimsicalities was to urge me to make excursions into the realms of verse; and I have heard from more than one of our friends quotation of his *ex cathedra* judgment that I was a mute inglorious Milton. Perhaps it was to retain this flattering belief on his part that I refrained from showing him this unique effort!

Enough has been said of the changes effected in the restricted circle of artist life in the nine years that had elapsed, counting from the writer's first return from Europe, to show that it was no longer to a strange city that this second homecoming was directed. In the constant frequentation common to the men of that time there was much kindly intercourse, and, what was more valuable in a productive sense, much friendly interest in, and critical consideration of, each others' work. These conditions the writer essayed to put to profit; first, to complete the second of the books illustrated by his drawings for the poems of Keats, and then to take advantage of whatever artistic success they brought him to quit the field in which this success was gained;

and to put by illustration in black and white in favour of work in colour. He has never regretted this step, and (for the guidance of youth once more) he would willingly counsel others to do likewise to-day.

For the life of the illustrator is of short duration. The established reputation of any artist in our fickle country has at best so little in common with the dreams of avarice, that his continued activity must be purchased by an expenditure of prescient energy, watchful of changing conditions, unknown to the arts of long-established tradition in older countries.

Such resourceful adaptation of temperamental expression can be made without loss of dignity or subservience to transitory popular demands; but the changes in the public demand for the illustrator's work are so rapid that the most agile and versatile talent soon finds itself outstripped in the race.

There are comparatively few born illustrators, the majority of our men have been trained as painters and drift into illustration, because of all the branches of art it is the one most founded upon a commercial basis of demand and supply, and entrance therein is comparatively easy for the young artist without fortune, reputation, or powerful friends. Its demands to-day are but little short of the most exclusive of our exhibitions; and, since the advent of reproduction in colour, many of the pages of our magazines demand but little change to prove most acceptable to our exhibitions, where the dearth of pictures of human interest—which is the keynote of all illustration—is most keenly felt. Consequently, if a word of mine may induce any of our men to use illustration as a means to his longer productive

activity, rather than as the end of his effort, it shall be said; for all experience shows that the popular illustrator of to-day is not only forgotten to-morrow, but as the man survives he finds that the welcome his first work receives is more quickly turned to disfavour than in any other branch of art.

Fear of waning favour was not alone the reason for the writer's desertion of the work to which he owed his first success, so much as an inborn love of decoration; and, as up to that time stained glass had not proven to be of enough commercial value to inspire the organization of the great business houses, which to-day furnish memorial windows in assorted sizes and stereotyped subjects, he found work in that congenial field, awaiting the advent of mural-painting whose promise could be felt in the air, but whose eclosion lingered. Meanwhile upon the other side of the Atlantic the changed conditions of Louis Stevenson's life, the death of his father permitting him to leave England, and the weary battle for better health in which he was gradually losing ground, all contributed to a decision, on his part, to make a desperate effort, and seek in another climate a renewal of strength which the older land denied him.

Since his visit to Paris one prostration had followed another, and it must have been with the spirit of the leader of a forlorn hope that he wrote the following letter:

"SKERRYVORE, BOURNEMOUTH,

"*August* 6, 1887.

"MY DEAR LOW:

"We—my mother, my wife, my step-son, my maid-servant and myself, 5 souls—leave, if all is well, Aug.

20th per Wilson line S. S. *Ludgate Hill*. Shall probably evade N. Y. at first, cutting straight to a watering place: Newport, I believe, its name. Afterward we shall steal incognito into *la bonne ville*, and see no one but you and the Scribners, if it may be so managed. You must understand that I have been very seedy indeed, quite a dead body; and unless the voyage does miracles I shall have to draw it dam fine. . . . Till very soon, Yours ever, R. L. S."

The editor of "Scribner's Magazine" can hardly have forgotten the 7th of September, 1887, for it was that day that we had received news that the *Ludgate Hill* was off Fire Island and would dock that afternoon; and it was in his company that I went to meet Stevenson. It seemed quite in character that the steamer, which had none of the smartness of the modish liners, should be boarded by means of a ship's ladder, and "Stevenson, ahoy!" seemed the most appropriate greeting for my friend. We found him on deck, and all his thoughts of stealing into the good city incognito must have been rudely shattered, for he was already surrounded by a dozen reporters.

One of these, in fact, having learned that, in his own estimation he was merely an obscure British author, whose views could have but little interest for the public, had the effrontery to warn him, on our approach, to "look out for those fellows; they represent the Associated Press, and they'll worm all your secrets out of you."

To my intense relief the voyage had indeed "done miracles." The ship had proved to be one after his

own heart, a veritable Noah's Ark, laden with "stallions and monkeys, and matches" (these last slightly incongruous to the simile); but withal enjoyable to the last degree as he enthusiastically informs his cousin Bob.

"I was so happy on board that ship, I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather and many discomforts, but the mere fact of its being a tramp-ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind—full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as for that."

The voyage coming "after a most nefast experience of despondency before I left" had rekindled his interest in life, and he trod the deck, chaffing the reporters gently, welcoming the representative of his American publishers, who later was to become his friend; presenting us to his mother, who was destined also to become very dear to my wife and me; and to his step-son, whom I had last seen at Grez in the character of "*petit feesh*"; in a word, doing the honours of the occasion with the spirit and gallantry of the skipper of a spanking clipper.

The preliminaries of landing were soon over, the only delay being caused by Stevenson's scrupulous desire to declare some trifling trinkets, which he brought as presents, to the lone customs officer who had been detached for the service of the *Ludgate Hill*, who was quite visibly bored by this excess of virtue and received

the few dollars of duty with an air of, "Nobody asked you, sir, she said."

I remained behind to arrange for the transfer of their luggage, and the whole party repaired to a hotel, where everything had been arranged for their reception by their kind friends, whose guests they were to be at Newport a few days after.

When in my turn I arrived at the hotel the excitement of the arrival had told on Stevenson, and he was lying down, looking pale and wan. He insisted, however, on seeing Mrs. Low, who had joined me, and we talked for a time together. A number of reporters had followed him to the hotel, and they were very considerate when I went to them and explained that it was really impossible for my friend to receive them, and gave them what little information I could. I had hardly returned to his side when a card was brought up, and Stevenson, on reading a few lines pencilled thereon, exclaimed, "I must see this one; for he says that he is a Scot, from my own town." And so in a few moments a fresh-faced youth, with a Scottish burr on his tongue, was ushered in, and Stevenson had no sooner learned that he was a student of the University of Edinburgh, and familiar with the conditions and scenes of his own boyhood, than he was deep in reminiscences; and it was far more due to the kind forbearance of the reporter than to any recollection on the part of Stevenson of his necessity of rest from excitement that the interview was not unduly prolonged. After a day's rest Stevenson and his kin proceeded to Newport. An incipient cold that he had caught off the Banks now declared itself, and he had no more than a glimpse of the beauti-

ful resort and its noble surroundings, for he was ill the few days he spent there, an illness greatly assuaged by the solicitous hospitality of the friends under whose roof he sojourned.

XXXI

A HALT BEFORE SARANAC

UPON their return from Newport we had arranged quarters for our friends in a quiet hotel in Eleventh Street, near University Place. Here in the early morning and late in the afternoon, when work was done, I would come, to be with Louis and to aid his watchful family against encroachments on his of necessity imposed privacy. There were two difficulties in the way of preserving a desirable amount of seclusion lest his partial improvement in health should suffer relapse. The first was his own delight in human companionship and interest in the new life by which he was surrounded. Any plea that was at all unusual, or promised some quality of interest in the visitor, found a warm partisan in the designated victim; and the watchers by his bedside were often obliged to battle with his imprudence before the intrusion was denied. The second was the volume of the enthusiasm that his presence in New York created, and the number of those who, actuated by mere curiosity or more avowable motives, desired to meet the author of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

It was this one of his already numerous works that was responsible for the popular character of his reception, for naturally his more authorized visitors knew his other books. But the Jekyll had touched the popular heart, and dozens of "pirated" editions, for this was

before the day of international copyright, had sown this popularity broadcast. Never was there a more puzzled man than this suddenly popular author. "I'm just an obscure 'literary gent' at home," was his plaint, "and this wave of notoriety frightens me. It cannot mean much from some of its indications; and what if I should grow to like it?"

His letters to his friends at home are all tinged with this mingled wonder and fear, as well as his depreciation of some of the more substantial evidences of his popularity, shown by the offers made for his work. One of these, from a popular newspaper, proposing that he furnish an article every week for a year, and offering ten thousand dollars as his honorarium, he characterized as "positively immoral."

As it was considerably more than his whole life work had brought him, it might have tempted a less conscientious artist, but his refusal showed no hesitation; and in general, after the first shock of surprise, all the manifestations of his sudden popularity left him cold. The dramatization of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," done by Mr. Russell Sullivan, was produced for the first time soon after his arrival; and though, having met the author of the adaptation, he was much interested in the play, it was not judged prudent that he should be present. His deprivation of sharing the public honours of the occasion caused him no apparent regret. In his place I escorted his wife and mother, and the latter, wearing her widow's cap, of an English fashion such as is familiar in the portraits of Queen Victoria, was conspicuous in the box where we were seated. At the conclusion of the piece, after many curtain calls for Mans-

field, who acted the titular rôle, rose the cry of "Author, author," and the eyes of the whole audience were directed to our box, where I stood directly behind the ladies. There was naturally no response, but the clamour continued, until it suddenly occurred to me that I was taken for the author, whereupon I incontinently subsided from sight on the floor of the box. In one of the newspapers the next morning was the note: "The author, who was present, was acclaimed by the audience, but for some reason refused to respond," which amused my friend when he read it.

It was easy to see that much of the character, much of the courage, and much of the cheerfulness of Louis came from his mother. The father I never saw, but of him we know that in many other traits the son was indebted to his side of the house. When we first met the elder Mrs. Stevenson the change from Heriot Row and the severance of life-long habits to New York and the customs here prevailing, might naturally have been thought, with a woman no longer young, likely to breed if not discontent, at least discouraging comparison. There was naught of this, but, on the contrary, a never-failing interest and apparent delight in the novel conditions. She was pleased with everything: with our ice-water and our "lifts," with the attention lavished on her son, with the reporters, "a nice bright set of men" (echoing Louis' opinion); and it soon became a sort of game with us to present the most novel aspects of our customs and manners for her consideration, without once eliciting more than a mild, "how curious, but I dare say there's some reason for it."

None of us foresaw then in what strange lands, and

among what barbaric surroundings, her faithful steps, keeping pace with her son's wanderings, would take her; but it is certain that never once did she fail to share her boy's interest in all the strange lands and strange sights that they encountered. In the photographs sent back from the cruise of the *Casco*, by which Louis kept us informed of their wanderings, it is indescribably touching to see, where all the others of their party are seated on the ground and in a sense indistinguishable from their savage hosts, the demure Scotch lady, seated erect in a chair, wherever procurable, spick and span, as though newly issued from her Edinburgh home for an afternoon visit to a friend of her own social rank, and coiffed by the widow's cap which became her so well. This cap she carried, I have been told, even on journeys in an open boat around the islands, in a box, ready to don on the first occasion of ceremony; and it may well be imagined that her placid dignity must have received its due meed of appreciation from all the ceremony-loving monarchs of the South Seas.

Several times during their sojourn at Saranac the mother came to New York and mingled in our mild gayeties and those of other friends of her son; to say nothing of those she had made for herself, who were numerous. She had a keen sense of humour, and her conversation, without any pretension of brilliancy, for one of her most charming traits was a modest assumption of surprise that she should be the mother of so brilliant a son, was always interesting. Later, to anticipate, alone and unattended she twice voyaged halfway around the globe in order that she might be of

service to her family at home. One of these voyages brought her again to New York where, unchanged, and forgetful of every discomfort that she had met with in her travels, only the interesting and humorous episodes remained in her memory, and were recounted for her home-keeping friends, with the pleasant Scotch intonation of her voice, recalling that of Louis's.

But to anticipate; by all the years in the South Seas, where Louis "was to recover peace of body and mind," until his final rest upon the hill-crest above Vailima, the most abiding memory of the mother is that of a few days in Edinburgh in the summer of 1895.

Following her son's death, there were other duties awaiting her at home near her sister, the beloved "Auntie," whose skirts, in the "Child's Garden of Verses":

> " . . . trail behind her up the floor,
> And trundle after through the door."

This lady, through an accident in her girlhood, when she was thrown from a horse, was nearly blind and quite deaf; but, though seeing little and hearing less, the indomitable family characteristics endowed her with courage and cheerfulness, some part of which she communicated to others. In Mrs. Stevenson's family circle, including that of her brother, "that wise child, my uncle," Dr. George Balfour, who had come to me some years before in New York, en route to a medical congress in Canada, with a note from Louis, there was a succession of days that have left pleasant memories.

The most impressive of these, however, are the hours that I spent with the mother. I had looked to find her

broken, the pride and joy of her life being gone. But the dear lady, supported by her faith, for she was profoundly religious, though more in action than in words, awaited her reunion with Louis in cheerful patience, busying herself meanwhile with the well-being of those about her. The presence of her son seemed to be with her, for there was a definite sensation as we talked—she almost more cheerfully than at first I could command myself to do—that he was still near us. With gentle pride she enumerated the many tokens of the love which he had inspired, that had been manifested since his death, and the tributes to his worth as an artist, which comforted her greatly and filled to some little degree the solitude of her bereavement.

I have never seen a great sorrow so nobly borne, for I can think of no other word to qualify her attitude, though it was quite devoid of stoical fortitude; there was nothing of the Spartan mother to be felt; but her simpler nature, accustomed throughout life to extract some measure of pleasure from every duty, had reached a serene altitude where she visibly felt that her reward was near, if to the last she remained faithful to the task of the day.

There was at the time a definite project for an illustrated edition of the "Child's Garden of Verses," for which I was to make the drawings in pursuance of an earlier plan that Louis had proposed, and for which he had sent me advance proofs of the book before it was first issued in England, ten years before. This had been found to be impossible at that time, but the project had come up more than once in our talks, and now that he was gone, I was more than ever anxious to

link my name with his. To all my plans for this book the mother listened with the greatest interest, and made suggestions in their extension that would have greatly added to the value of the work. Together we visited a number of the scenes of my friend's childhood, for it was my desire to incorporate as much of biographical truth as possible in the work; and though I was called away at the end of the week, I left with the intention of returning later in the summer, and with her assistance reconstituting as much as possible the child-life of Louis, by visiting and making drawings of all the scenes commemorated in the verses.

Like so many of his own projects, circumstances arose to prevent this work being undertaken; but, from this partial voyage of rediscovery in the company of my friend's mother, and from the details of his childhood, which our talks brought back to her, I carried away an impression of having once more been very near to him; and, above all, added memories of a sweet and brave woman.

I have gone far afield in my desire to give a more complete picture of the elder Mrs. Stevenson, esteeming it a privilege to have known her and glad that our affection for Louis had proved a sufficient bond to ensure her friendship from the first days of their sojourn in the little hotel in Eleventh Street, where we may now return.

At the time of their arrival in this country the ultimate destination of Stevenson was still in doubt. Colorado had been the place the most seriously considered as possessing a climate that promised amelioration, if not a cure for him; but the journey thither was held to be fraught with danger, in the weak condition where

the relapse after the ocean voyage had left him. Dr. Trudeau's presence at Saranac, and the cures that had been effected there, were brought to the notice of Stevenson; and, as his case admitted of no delay, the younger Mrs. Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne volunteered to go at once to see if a house could be found there, in case the resident physician advised the coming of Louis.

Consequently they departed, and Louis was left in the care of his mother, and such distraction from his illness as his condition permitted he found in her company and in that of friends near at hand. As usual, it was difficult to realize how frail a hold he held on life, for when not permitted to speak his pencil would trace the most amusing comments on all that came to his notice, and when his interest grew too strong for this method of communication he would throw prudence to the winds and talk *quand même*. On my morning visits we would amuse ourselves in opening the letters which came in large numbers, the most part being requests for autographs; which, when his name was spelt correctly, when stamps were enclosed, and the request conveyed in courteous language, he invariably complied with. One demand, it could hardly be called a request, excited flattering imitation for some time afterward; our talk and our correspondence all that winter echoing its phraseology. It ran like this: "Sir: I have to trouble you for your autograph and that of your talented wife." For months after we would "have to trouble" each other for the most trifling service, and our wives were gratified with "talented," until these ladies begged for respite.

One day I brought him, to his delight, the manuscript of Henry James' admirable paper, of which he was the subject, that now forms part of the volume of "Partial Portraits," which I had borrowed for the purpose from my good friends of the "Century Magazine"; and on another day I was witness to an amusing scene, where the accomplished editor of that periodical proved an alibi for an accusation that Stevenson repeated, with mock earnestness, from a silly story that had crept into the papers at the time.

This purported to give an account of a visit to the offices of the magazine made by Louis in 1880, when on his way to California, to offer his services as a writer, which had met with a rude rebuff. He had, in point of fact gone there to procure my address, and this being furnished, had, I believe, suggested that he would like to undertake work for them, to which he had received the reply that any unknown author would receive in any magazine office: that if he cared to submit any work it would be carefully considered. This plain, unvarnished version of the incident did not suit his mood of the moment, and he embroidered, upon the already exaggerated journalistic account, a most touching picture of the indignities to which he had been subjected, until the accused neatly turned the tables by inquiring the exact date of the occurrence, at which time it appeared that the alleged culprit was in Europe.

The memory of his late voyage was strong upon him and his talk was much of the sea. There was then no thought of the Pacific voyage, but the outcome of his great desire to be afloat took the form of a project for a summer cruise along our Eastern coast. "It is the only

life to live," he protested, "and now that my mother has proved a good sailor she is willing to charter a yacht, if it can be had for less than 'the eyes of the head.'" *

To help carry out this project I made some inquiries at his request among the yachting agencies, and found that, without costing "*les yeux de la tête*," a serviceable yacht might be chartered for two or three months. Later in the winter, shortly before his return from Saranac, the commodore of one of our yacht-clubs came to me, at the instance of another friend, with the welcome message that an admirer of Stevenson's work, who owned a roomy and comfortable sea-going yacht, would be pleased to put it at the disposition of the latter for the bare cost of keeping it in commission.

The plans which resulted may be left to be told in their proper order, for by this time Mrs. Louis, as, to prevent confusion with his mother, we were wont to call my friend's wife, and her son had returned from Saranac, with the report that a suitable house for the winter had been found and that a sojourn in the northern woods promised well for Louis. There was still considerable preparation to be made and, before the family finally took their flight northward, nearly a month had passed, during which time Louis' strength had visibly improved.

In trying to give some pictures of Louis' daily life at this time I have purposely reserved the most important event of his first station in our city for a fuller description in the following chapter. To bring together two men like Stevenson and Saint-Gaudens, to watch their

* "Les yeux de la tête"—common French locution.

instant understanding grow to close friendship, to see day by day the by far most satisfactory portrait of Stevenson develop through the sympathetic genius of Saint-Gaudens, and meanwhile to listen or join in the talk by which these hours were enlivened, was a privilege for which my gratitude is only exceeded by the gratification which both these men never wearied of expressing to their intermediary friend, as for a service rendered.

Knowing them as I did, it was to me a foregone conclusion that they should like each other; but though there are few things more gratifying than to bring congenial friends together, it has never been my good fortune to be so completely successful in this endeavour as when Augustus Saint-Gaudens met Robert Louis Stevenson.

XXXII

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON AND AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

THERE are graver, but there are few more exasperating instances of the differences of taste that divide otherwise congenial friends, than when one of these fails to share an enthusiasm proper to the other; to accept it like a ready-made garment and adopt it as his own. I had consequently grieved that, to my early enthusiastic appreciation of Stevenson as a writer, Saint-Gaudens had shown a polite willingness to accept my word for it, but had neglected to avail himself of the opportunity to read either the "Inland Voyage" or the "Travels with a Donkey" at the time of their publication.

In his youth I imagine that, preoccupied with the technical qualities of his art, he had read but little, and to the end, if one were to believe his modest self-depreciation, he considered himself quite unlettered. This was an excess of modesty, for no man who had thought so deeply as he could be deaf to the awakening impulse of literature, and it was obviously a mere confusion between quantity and quality that had bred this self-depreciation in his mind. But if the books that he read were comparatively few, they were, in his belief, of his own discovery, for more than once has it happened that a work to which his attention had been directed would fall in his way long after, when in an-

other mood he had forgotten its favourable recommendation, and would greatly impress him; and then no one was so eager as he to share his pleasure with others. One typical instance was his late discovery of so well known a work as "Candide"; and his propaganda among his friends in favour of Voltaire was as enthusiastic as it was characteristic of the man, who was as generous in his appreciation of a fine thing as he could be severely critical of one that failed.

Consequently, I was no whit surprised when Saint-Gaudens came to me loud with the praises of the "New Arabian Nights," which he had just read. I even believe that, with true nobility of character, I refrained from saying "I told you so"—all the more because, in some contrition, he expressed his regret for having neglected his earlier opportunity to become acquainted with the works of Stevenson. From that time on he was numbered with the faithful, reading all that my favourite author had written, and sharing the letters that I received with an insatiable curiosity to know all that he could of the man.

He regretted greatly the mischance of missing his acquaintance in Paris, and had exacted from me the promise that if Stevenson ever came within speaking distance he should know him. This promise he recalled when he was on his way to this country, and said that if Louis would consent, he would consider it a privilege to model his portrait.

The state of Stevenson's health was such that, though there were a number of my friends with whom I knew the pleasure of acquaintance would be mutual, I exercised a regretful but necessary self-control, with the

approval of the guardians of his well-being, not to bring about meetings which I knew he would enjoy, and to which his consent would only too willingly have been given.

With these vigilant guardians there was a momentary hesitation, lest the fatigue of sitting for his portrait should be more than he should be subjected to; but the first sight of Saint-Gaudens destroyed whatever share of this hesitation Louis might have felt, for the two men "took to" each other from the first.

"Astonishingly young, not a bit like an invalid, and a bully fellow," was Saint-Gaudens's answer to my query concerning his impression, as we came out together from their first meeting. "I like your sculptor, what a splendid straightforward and simple fellow he is, and handsome as well," was Stevenson's salutation, when I came to him later in the day. The sittings had been arranged at this first interview and, at Saint-Gaudens's request, I endeavoured to be always present when he worked, and thanks to our triangular flow of talk, I doubt if Louis ever felt for a moment the constraint of posing.

Parenthetically, I may say that this was fortunate, for in nearly all his photographs there is a trace of self-consciousness that in all other aspects of the man was wholly absent. The following spring I remember a half day spent with him at a photographer's where he tried my patience sorely, and where he, though he assured me in self-defence against my protest that he was doing his best to avoid it, was forced to confess that he no sooner saw the eye of the camera directed at him than he forced himself to "look pleasant."

The best of his photographs is the one not over-well reproduced in the first volume of the "Letters," which was a veritable "snap-shot," taken by Lloyd Osbourne who, then of school-boy age, was playing with a camera, and calling on Stevenson to look up caught him unawares.

There was another, taken at Bournemouth by a professional photographer, which we charged him with secretly loving and sending to all the young women who wrote to express their admiration of his work; "a fine, chicken-hearted presentment of a young poet" he owned it to be, half confessing to this weakness, in which he was wholly abetted by his mother, with whom it was a favourite picture, and who protested against our scorn.

For Saint-Gaudens the way was made easy. "I could not escape, if I would," said the sitter, for the sculptor's easel was drawn up near the bed where Stevenson was a prisoner. Never was dungeon more enlivened by talk, of which, as usual, it is difficult to give much idea, so constantly did subjects change, and so wide the gamut from serious consideration of serious topics to the lightest and wildest chaff.

The relief rapidly took the form in which it was first conceived, a circular composition suggested probably by the lines of Stevenson's figure sitting propped by the pillows at his back, his knees raised; his usual position to read or write in bed. The general composition was quickly indicated in masses, but the head alone was finished at this time, the hands being completed the following year from casts which Saint-Gaudens made during Stevenson's stay at Manasquan. By that time

Chimney-piece in the author's studio, with the portrait medallion of R. L. S.

A copy of it built into my chimney-piece looks down on me in my studio.—Page 435

the whole medallion was advanced nearly to completion, and in this circular form it appears to me much to be preferred to the oblong relief which, about fifteen years later, was placed in position in the Church of St. Giles in Edinburgh—the Scottish Westminster Abbey, where many of the greater men of the country are commemorated.

A greater change, affecting the expressional quality of Saint-Gaudens's original conception, was made at the dictation of the authorities of the church. The suppression of the verses, originally written in acknowledgment of the dedication of my work in "Lamia"—a dedication made "in testimony . . . of a common faith in 'doubtful tales from faery-land,'" and of which Louis wrote, "I accept the terms of the dedication with a frank heart"—that Saint-Gaudens had incorporated as a part of his design, appears to me most regretful.

I am well aware that the expression of this regret might be interpreted as one unbecomingly tinged by the personal equation, but my feeling was strongly shared by the sculptor who, not long before his death, deplored the circumstances by which he had been forced to make the change. Leaving entirely out of the question therefore the personal direction of these verses, they more perfectly reflect the man who wrote them, his belief in his art, the tendency of his work, and the philosophy of his life, than is elsewhere expressed, at least in so concrete a form, in any other of his writings. The prayer of Stevenson's composition which was eventually substituted in the memorial medallion is, however beautiful, an expression of only a

single phase of his character, and is to this degree misleading—that, throughout life his faith was shown in deed rather than in supplication.

The memorial may, however, be taken as merely an official variation of the original conception which fortunately remains; a copy of it built into my chimney-piece looks down on me in my studio, where, surrounded by an ivy-wreath as an emblem of friendship, the sculptor, with a decorative sense of the beauty of an inscription that was peculiarly his own, has modelled in relief on the background the entire poem, with its frank acceptance of our common lot and its brave confession of abiding faith at the end:

> Life is over, life was gay,
> We have come the primrose way.

Life seemed held by but a slender thread for one of us in those days, but it was continuously gay by Stevenson's bedside as Saint-Gaudens's work grew apace.

One morning Louis attacked the conditions of American life as they appeared to him, urging that the tendency of a system like ours was to place all men upon a common level, or, as in deference to his hearers he expressed it, "lift them to a sufficiently high average," but one which rendered difficult the expression of strong individuality.

He gave us a number of instances of the contrary effect of the civilization of the British Isles, some of which were sufficiently amusing, and denoted strong individual characteristics in the men he rapidly sketched for us. "But here," he concluded, "you cannot tell whether a man is from Boston or Denver; they may

both be charming fellows, but they are usually as like as two peas."

In answer we insisted that his opinion was not generally held in either of the cities cited, and would probably meet with indignant denial in both. We were forced to admit that there was some truth in his assertion, so far as the superficial aspects of our people were concerned, but we asserted that this was only natural, as our newer conditions afforded none of the quiet back-waters removed from the main current of life that had survived in the older countries from earlier conditions, and were doomed by the march of progress to disappear even there, but which meanwhile afforded a refuge where personal idiosyncrasy could develop without hindrance.

Moreover, in further refutal of Stevenson's contention, we were certain that without going out of the circle of our friends, certainly keeping within that of our acquaintances, we could muster a number of our compatriots who for strongly marked individual characteristics would satisfy the most ardent lover of idiosyncrasies. Thereupon Saint-Gaudens and I projected an imaginary dinner of twenty-five or thirty covers to which Stevenson should be invited, and where each man, by artful contrivance, should be induced to advance his own private theories of life, morals, or art; and the only difficulty which we could foresee was that each one of the invited should be, for his proper safety, encased in armour.

As one after the other passed in rapid review Saint-Gaudens's faculty for visualizing gave each character life, and Stevenson lamented that some such festivity

could not take place; owning at the end that he had been led into a sin that he abhorred: of making a general statement upon insufficient knowledge.

At another time the conversation turned on the purely accidental avoidance of the nude on the part of Saint-Gaudens, who declared then, as I have often heard him say before or since, that "if he ever got a moment free," he would repair the omission. To fortify him in this resolve, I quoted Emerson:

> The sinful painter drapes his goddess warm,
> Because she still is naked, being dressed:
> The god-like sculptor will not so deform
> Beauty, which limbs and flesh enough invest.

These lines took Stevenson's fancy greatly, and for the rest of the time that they were together, and in his subsequent correspondence with Saint-Gaudens, he was generally addressed or referred to as the "God-like sculptor"—a form of address which may have puzzled some of the readers of the "Letters."

Once or twice Saint-Gaudens asked me to take his place and criticise the work, or as he put it, "to jump on it, just as I would to a pupil in the school." Thus invited I scrutinized the model and compared the portrait without finding any but minor suggestions of detail to enhance closer resemblance.

In addition to its veracious character it is superfluous to speak of this medallion as a work of art, for whatever reservation may yet come to be made concerning other forms of sculpture by Saint-Gaudens, the series of relief-portraits which he modelled, where this one ranks among the best, are all characterized by absolute mastery.

My episode with Stevenson
has been one of the events
of my life and I ~~am~~
~~be~~ more understand the
state of mind G— gets
in about people— I'm in
that healthy state

It makes me very happy and as
the pursuit of happiness is
an "unalienable right" "God given"
one and indivisible"

vide constitution of
United States

I'm damned if I don't think
I've a right to be so
provided I don't injure any one

Yours ever
G.

Facsimile of a letter and caricatures by Saint-Gaudens

The signature here shows Saint Gaudens's amusing caricature of his *Francois-premier* profile, a resemblance denoting the Provençal ancestry common to both, with which he frequently signed his more intimate letters.

It was with heart-felt regret, and many amicable protestations, that the two new friends parted when the moment came for Stevenson and his family to go to Saranac. I had formed the pleasant habit of sharing their life a part of each day and, having been a pleased witness of the progress of this new relation between two men for whom I felt such hearty affection, I regretted the cessation of work upon the medallion.

As for Saint-Gaudens, the following extract from one of his letters, containing a characteristic drawing, best explains the effect upon him of this happy encounter.

"WINDSOR, VT., 29 *September*, 1887.

". . . . My episode with Stevenson has been one of the events of my life, and I can now understand the state of mind —— gets in about people. I am in that beatific state. It makes me very happy, and as the pursuit of happiness is an 'inalienable right, God-given, one and indivisible' (vide Constitution of the United States), I'm damned if I don't think I've a right to be, provided I don't injure anyone. . . ."

Stevenson's parting message, as he left on his northward journey was "Don't forget to find out all you can about yachts for the summer. The Rhone trip didn't come off, but we may make a book together yet; and in any case you've never known what life is until you live on the sea."

And so in this spirit I left him on the Hudson River boat one morning in early October, not yet knowing that it was always to be my fate to bid him God-speed —and never to share his journey.

XXXIII

THE RETURN FROM SARANAC

OUR friends were soon installed at Saranac, and the first message received from Louis assured us of their comfort. It ran like this:

"SIR:

"I have to trouble you with the following *paroles bien senties*. We are here at a first-rate place. 'Baker's' is the name of our house, but we don't address there; we prefer the tender care of the Post Office, as more aristocratic (it is no use to telegraph even to the care of the Post Office, who does not give a single damn)."

Then followed an invitation to visit him, to occupy a "prophet's chamber, which the hypercritical might describe as a garret with a hole in the floor," and the signature of "your respected and talented friend, pitcher, and fellow-ass, R. L. S."; while, as an afterthought, in one corner of the page were the welcome words, "I am well."

Three or four times that winter were visits projected, twice at least was luggage made ready, but the strange fatality which thrice the preceding year had prevented visits to Skerryvore, was still active to frustrate the plans of a busy man, and the visit was never made. The winter, however, saw both the wife and the mother in New York for short visits, as one or the other could

be spared from the side of Louis, and by letters our communication was frequent.

The bleak winter weather was kind to the invalid. For one of northern birth he had little love for the place despite the invigorating qualities of the cold dry air of the Adirondack woods, and in his letters of the time there runs a vein of yearning for the sun, which obstinately kept hidden, and of distaste for the "wilderness of hills and fir woods and bowlders and snow and wooden houses." It was "Highland, all but the dear hue of peat" . . . "Highland, also, but for the lack of heather." There was, I fancy, a deeper reason for his dislike: Saranac was a "health resort." Two winters at Davos had been beneficial for his health, but when the third flight from his inhospitable native heath was projected, he had obstinately refused to return to Davos, and had fled to the South, to Hyéres and the sun.

He prayed for a return of strength, he was willing to listen to advice, he was not a fool imprudently to risk his life; but except when the iron hand of physical incapacity held him prostrate, he simply could not accept the life of an invalid. To be surrounded by others apparently in worse case than himself, to see the world from the windows of a sick room, was not life from his point of view. It was not what he had come so far to seek, nor what, in seeking still further, he eventually found. Consequently, though through this winter he was in the main fairly well, and was able to skate and venture out of doors in the most rigorous weather (whereas in even the mild climate of Bournemouth he had been, in the winter season, imprisoned indoors, lead-

ing the life of "a weevil in a biscuit"), he disliked his surroundings.

His work progressed, the essays for Scribner's and a good part of the "Master of Ballantrae" rewarded his toil. Many of his letters to me, who was in a position to procure and send to our friends articles of comfort or necessity, were occupied with these details; his request being generally couched in characteristic language. From one of these, after a long list of household necessities, I extract the following:

". . . . Sir, since 2 P. M. yesterday, a period of nearly eighteen hours, the wretched man who now addresses you has not smoked. The same length of time has elapsed since the high-bred Lloyd Osbourne has Broken Tobacco. The famine has passed through all the usual stages; tissue paper from between visiting cards and 'baccy from the bottom of pockets having been consumed; but now, sir, the last 'ope has waltzed into space, and neither Osbourne nor myself can longer blink the conviction that

"'Hall is over,
Farewell.'

"When our memorial notices are written, this will be a shrewd cut at the States, *under whose banner* we perish. Well, I am now done with the passions of mortality—Farewell! but if a tin of Margarita and a mass of cigarette papers came by post, without prejudice to another tin in the general packet, it would not find me alive, of course, no, but it might be handy for my executors.

"Sir, Yours, R. L. S.

"I pray God all is well with the Talented. '*La vie sans Tabac*' (good name for a book) smiles on me but little. Good heavens, Low, what a melancholy fate is mine—still so young, and had I strength left, I might flee from this horrible place; there is help at Plattsburg —the mail goes."

The "shrewd cut at the States" was a thrust at my— I take my readers to witness—not inordinate patriotism. Not long before in an international discussion between us, in which I regret to say that I had been forced to take sides against my own wife and her ally of Scotch birth; though I was ably supported by Mrs. Stevenson, Louis had closed the debate, heaving a profound sigh and shaking his head, with "My dear Mrs. Low, it is quite useless to argue, *I, too, have married an American.*"

With frequent messages from Saranac, and the usual mixture of much work and a little play, the winter in New York passed quickly. Almost before the passage of time was realized April had come, and our friends were once more occupying their former quarters in the Hotel St. Stephen in Eleventh Street, which by this time had come to be known among the intimates as the Hotel St. Stevenson.

The improvement in the physical condition of Stevenson was evident. He was still obliged to exercise precaution against overfatigue, but he could venture out in the middle of the day, and was able to see more people than on his previous visit.

The previous year I had been honoured by election to the Century, and though my friend was not able to share our evening meetings there, he was provided with

a card that enabled him to pass pleasant morning hours in the well-appointed library. The Century Association (to give it its full and formal title) was then located in Fifteenth Street, near Union Square, in an old-fashioned house which afforded more of the homely comforts of some of the English clubs than its present palatial building suggests. It was not unlike the Savile Club in London, which Stevenson had frequented in his younger days, and he enjoyed its atmosphere greatly. In the mornings he had the library almost to himself, and worked there, in the surroundings of Gothic woodwork, furniture, and gas fixtures (circa 1857) to his great content. He met few of the members, but one such encounter was interesting as proof of the oft-repeated assertion that the world is very small.

The incident was told me by Mr. John La Farge, who, happening in the library one morning in research of some reference book, noticed, in Mr. La Farge's words: "an interesting man, with the look of an invalid," occupied in writing. After a few minutes the stranger paused and, producing a tobacco-pouch and paper, rolled a cigarette, and then looked around, obviously lacking a match. Ever courteous, Mr. La Farge rose and, crossing to where the stranger sat, gave him the needed commodity, and then, as the other looked up to thank him, recognized him to be Stevenson. Beyond this simple courtesy there were no words exchanged, and when these two men next met it was in far-off Samoa, where, fortunately, they grew to know each other well to their mutual enjoyment.

Mention of the Century brings to mind words of praise which it has elicited from two distinguished men,

and which its loyal members love to quote. The first of these is Thackeray's extravagant encomium that "it is the best club in the world," and the second is the assertion of General Sherman that "it was the only place in New York where he could go without being mobbed."

These were the days which the hero of the march to the sea was passing in dignified retirement in New York where, with all war-like passions stilled, he was constantly the recipient of the enthusiastic, and occasionally embarrassing, attentions of his fellow-citizens. In preparation for the noblest monument we possess, Saint-Gaudens was engaged in modelling the bust of the General at this time and, coming fresh from these sittings, the sculptor was prolific with the wise sayings, or the interesting incidents, born of the long afternoons which they passed together.

Preoccupied as was Saint-Gaudens with Stevenson, he desired to bring the two men together, and the desire to meet the great General was no less intense on the part of Louis, who had read Sherman's Memoirs, and with his inherent respect for a great soldier admired him greatly. Saint-Gaudens therefore approached the subject with his sitter. "Stevenson? Stevenson?" inquired the General. "He wishes to meet me. Who is he, one of 'my boys'?" By this endearing title the old warrior knew the hosts of survivors of his campaigns who were wont to seek their former commander. "Not in the army, eh? A Scotchman, an author, what has he written?" Alas, the good General had been more occupied in making history than in following current literature, and the catalogue of Stevenson's works left him cold until "Jekyll and

Hyde" was mentioned. "He wrote that, did he, first-rate play, saw Mansfield in it, I'll be glad to meet your friend." A day was appointed, but when Stevenson was ushered into the presence of General Sherman, he was somewhat flustered at the inquiry as to what specific corps of the army, in what regiment and company he had served. "But," he laughed as he told me the story, "thanks to Saint-Gaudens, I was ready for the dear old boy, and so I told him that I had not had the luck of serving under him, but was simply the author of 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.'" He was quite certain that the General had not read the book, and so for the rest of the interview he wore unblushingly the laurels of Mr. Russell Sullivan, to whom was due the dramatization of his story. Evidently, however, the visit had been highly satisfactory to them both, for Stevenson at once turned the conversation to the General's book and, as between fellow-authors, the conversation had been animated. Louis had been greatly impressed by the book and knew it well, and having an overwhelming respect for one who had actually lived its pages, we may be sure that he talked both well and becomingly to the soldier-author. "So you were not in the least disappointed with your hero at close range?" I inquired. "Disappointed—it was magnificent to simply stand in the presence of one who had done what he has, and then to find him so genial and human. It was the next thing to seeing Wellington, and I dare say that the Iron Duke would not have been half so human."

He was silent a moment, and then broke out: "Why, he actually tried to sell me his book! He asked me

when and in what edition I had read it, and when I told him, he said that there was a new and better edition, and insisted on going to another room to bring a copy to show me. He ran over its pages, pointed out new matter and additional maps, told me the publisher's name, its price, and earnestly advised me to get a copy. All this just as simply as you or I—and to think that he has led armies!"

It is hardly necessary to say that, back of all his keen appreciation of the humour of the situation, Stevenson, as he told these details of his interview, hid no shadow of disrespect. He went to the meeting a genuine hero-worshipper in the best sense of the word, for as he has shown in many a written page his admiration for the soldier as a type was sincere, and had he found a military martinet, he would have accepted him as such. To find, however, that this man of deeds, having laid by the sword, was a simple gentleman, touched him more deeply, and no incident of his visit lessened his appreciation of all that Sherman was and all that he represented.

I remember upon another occasion his saying that the finest result of our Civil War was the resumption of the tasks of peace immediately at its close, and by the very men who had done the hardest fighting. He quoted Grant's famous order after Appomattox, by which he restored the horses of the vanquished army to the disbanded troops, in order that they might be used for the spring ploughing, as among the noblest words of history, and the simplicity of his hero at close range affected him in like manner.

One other little incident happened at the time of one of my morning visits, which I had resumed after Ste-

venson's return to New York. A card was sent in, together with a note in which the writer asked that Louis would consent to give him a brief sitting for a drawing that, begun from a photograph, the artist desired to finish from nature. Stevenson was in bed, was feeling far from well, and prudence would have dictated a refusal of this request. But a glance at the visitor's card induced a decision in his favour. It bore the name of a man whose work at that time appeared frequently in our illustrated press. He was a foreigner, and with an acuteness of business instinct that is supposed to be American, but which an alien often puts to profit in a way that a native would hesitate to do, his card bore the names of some forty journals that he claimed to represent, or for which he had worked. Stevenson therefore insisted that he should be permitted to see this multi-journalistic personage, and so he was admitted. He was of pleasant manner, and assured Stevenson that it would not be necessary to retain a fixed position, and that he would limit his stay to one hour. Then, detaching his watch and handing it to my friend, he said, "You will see that I am a man of my word. Let me begin now, and stop on the minute that the hour has elapsed."

I left them, but on coming again later in the day I found Stevenson delighted with the experience. "He had been everywhere—had seen everything, and talked extremely well about it all. Do you know what I did? *I turned his watch back an hour*, I was so afraid to lose him." *

Indulgences like these were certainly a mild form of

*As some of my readers may surmise, this entertaining visitor was the versatile Valerian Gribayedoff—whose death is announced from Paris, almost as I write these lines.

dissipation, but slight as they were the number of people that he saw, and the ardour which he employed in resuming the "kindly commerce with men," which meant so much to him, began to tell upon Stevenson's feeble store of strength. The early morning hours found him at his work, and when about nine o'clock I made my appearance he had already done his task for the day—three and sometimes four hours of work. His spirit flagged, and more than I had ever seen him he became depressed. Toward the end of April, I was greeted on entering the room one morning with "Low, you must get me out of this." I sat by him and we talked the matter over. The plans for the summer were undecided, but in general the project for the cruise along the Eastern coast still held, and in June a commodious yacht, with cabin accommodation for eight people, one that was built for family cruises, was to be put at his disposition. After a month or six weeks of loitering on the sea, a return to the Adirondacks and a camp on one of the lakes was considered; and for this I prophesied for my friend a complete revulsion of the feeling which he entertained for our northern forest. I had, long years before, enjoyed a delightful summer in these woods, and I knew that the life in boat and camp would be a novel and pleasing experience for him.

All definite plans were, however, held in abeyance pending the return from California of the younger Mrs. Stevenson, who during this time was absent from her husband's side on the Pacific edge of the continent. Stevenson needed an instant change, and from various suggestions that I made, the description of a place on

the Jersey coast pleased him the most, and he asked me to arrange for his going thither, "the sooner the better." And so, within a week, he, his mother, his stepson, and the faithful maid, Valentine Roch, were under the hospitable roof of my good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright, at Manasquan.

The Union House

The room on the second floor with the open window is the one occupied by Stevenson

XXXIV

THE FIFTH ACT

THE Manasquan River, flowing as a mere brook from its source ten or twelve miles inland, gradually spreads upon its approach to the Atlantic into a broad and shallow lagoon. Along its eastern bank and extending to the coast there is a region of sand interspersed with a stunted growth of pine and gnarled cedars twisted by the ocean winds, while dotted along the beach are hotels and straggling villages from Point Pleasant to beyond Barnegat. From the western border of the river the country stretches back, a pleasant arable land with many acres under cultivation, and a larger growth of woods. Upon this western bank, a mile and a half from the outlet of the river, stands an old-fashioned building, showing signs of continuous additions to meet the requirements of increasing "summer boarders," which, in 1888, had been for two generations known as the Union House. A lawn slopes to the river bank, where there is a dock for the service of many cat-boats and dories moored near by, and the bank is shaded by large willows, then more numerous than now, for some have fallen since the days when Stevenson sojourned there. I had passed at different times a couple of summers in this unpretentious hostelry, where the broad river provided much amusement in the way of boating, while the near proximity of the ocean afforded all the advantages of

the seaside. In mid-summer there were many guests, and the sorely tried hospitality of the hosts could not have sufficed for one in Stevenson's state of health; but I knew that in May, before the opening for the summer season, Mrs. Wainwright, who kept the inn, while her husband tended the country store contiguous to it, would make every provision for his comfort. I also knew that the older part of the house was of extremely solid construction, with capacious fireplaces and rooms that were proof against the vagaries of our spring-time weather.

To my request that my friends might be received, cordial consent was given; and Stevenson and his family greatly appreciated the wholesome comfort and unflagging attention which they enjoyed during the time of their stay at Manasquan.

My own work, unfortunately, could not be prosecuted under the mobile conditions that Stevenson's could, but every moment that I could spare from it I was with him, though none of us realized, of course, how near was the time of our definite parting. Mrs. Low, who shared his affection with me, stayed at Manasquan, and the greater part of the time I arranged to be there, for I felt as never before, that, as to the members of his own family, he clung to us with a singular dependence that measured the depth of his depression more eloquently than words. There were indications of this, trivial in their nature, but showing the arbitrary and whimsical fancies of a nervous invalid, which were utterly at variance with his usual patient and considerate care for those about him. He had a well-grounded fear of the contagion of a cold, for instance,

and as Valentine, the maid, was heard to cough, Stevenson at once decided that she was far more affected than she was willing to own, or, indeed, than any other member of his family considered her to be. Banishment from his presence was easy, but this did not satisfy him, and the poor creature finally had to consent to take to her bed, where, being a person of strong character, she inwardly raged at the injustice of her treatment. About the same time I arrived from the city, with the first symptoms of what promised to be a severe cold. I warned the other members of the family of this, and sent word to Louis that it was not prudent that I should approach him. "Ask him to come as far as the door of the room," was the message returned. This I did, and standing at a distance the conversation had not proceeded far before I was seized with a smart fit of coughing. I had hardly recovered, when Louis, in the most doctoral manner, announced: "That's merely a nervous cough, you've probably been smoking too much. There's no danger whatever from a cough like that"; and from then on he would have me at his side. Fortunately, the change of air aiding, the cold became no worse, and Louis did not suffer for his inconsistent desire for the company of a friend. The weather was only intermittently good from my point of view, but Stevenson found it to his liking, and was much out-of-doors. Aided and abetted by his stepson his interest was centred by the cat-boat, a craft new to his experience. A work on sailing-boats, by Lieut. Qualtrough of our navy, who was immediately rechristened Taffrail as more appropriate to the vocation, was eagerly studied, and theories about the proper

management of the cat-boat were put to instant practical tests.

My suggestion that some of the lank Jerseymen who loitered around the hotel, in the intervals of "treading" clams or pursuing the back-sliding crab, could give them practical instruction in handling this craft, was laughed to scorn by these enthusiasts, as not being based upon any experience of my own as a practical mariner, or on a proper appreciation of the scientific standpoint from which they desired to approach the subject.

My own knowledge, I cheerfully conceded, was scant, but it was a comfortable reflection that the river on which we sailed was for the most part shallow; though, with favouring winds, we were never actually reduced to wading ashore from a capsized boat. We sailed up and down the river, Stevenson being greatly pleased with the manner in which the laws of navigation were construed for our benefit; the draws in the three bridges which span the river in different places opening promptly for our cockle-shell craft, in response to the imperious toot of a tin horn which signified our desire to pass through the bridge. Once, when a train was detained on the railroad bridge in order that we might pass, Louis declared that the sense of our importance, shown by our having the right of way, was most gratifying.

His spirits rose in these innocent adventures, each of which, by contrast with his usual forced inactivity, took on, or was endowed by him, with some spice of romance. One afternoon we landed on an island a little way up the river, whose shore upon one side was protected by a bulkhead. As the island was nameless, we proceeded to repair the oversight and christened it

Treasure Island, after which we fell to with our pocket-knives to carve the name upon the bulkhead, together with our initials and the date. This inscription was there some years after, and if the winter tempests have spared it, I am pleased to signal it for some one in quest of a Stevenson autograph, as it might figure as a unique specimen in almost any collection.

This obvious duty accomplished, we crossed the island and, stretching ourselves on the sandy beach in the sun, we discoursed, while the soft air and the sense of awakening nature that comes with the spring lulled us into an agreeable realization of the pleasures of indolence. From this the lengthening shadows recalled us to the homeward hour.

Our covert was sheltered from the wind, and on the other side of the island our boat was hard aground, with a breeze on shore.

"There's work before us," said Louis, rising and stretching himself, but Lloyd was brisk upon his feet. "Here, let me go and sail the boat around to you," he cried. "You may," we cried in unison, settling back on the strand with one accord, as Lloyd ran in the direction of the boat. Louis followed him with his eyes, and then, shaking his head, said with solemnity: "Low, we're growing old. It's only a little while since we would have raced Lloyd for that privilege."

Louis had at that time taken up "The Wrong Box," which up to that point had been entirely written by Lloyd Osbourne, who, in his own words, says that Louis "breathed into it, of course, his own incomparable power, humour, and vivacity, and forced the thing to live as it had never lived before."

The text of this collaboration Louis read us one evening, and though I am forced to agree to some extent with the surviving author that there is "a sense of failure" as one reads the book to-day, this element was not apparent when it was read aloud, as Louis read it.

His voice was rich, with a peculiar quality of vibration well under control, and as the various intricacies of the plot were deftly disentangled, and the absurdities of Joseph Finsbury and his kindred were disclosed, the colder criticism which the printed book evokes fell before it. The reader's enjoyment was as keen as ours, for, though he kept perfect control of the situation, while we were well-nigh exhausted with laughter, he fairly beamed with joy.

Not the least wonderful—I use the word advisedly—quality of the performance was to see Louis, alert and masterful, making of this trivial task so complete and finished a representation, with such just measure of absorption and equal suggestion of reserve power, that a stranger, entering at that moment, would have found it impossible to believe that this easily competent comedian was one "far gone," for whom "the lights were turned down," around whose bedside some hours each day stood anxious watchers, striving as best they could to hide all trace of anxiety and to equal in courage and cheerfulness the victim marked with a dread malady.

There were two reasons for collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne; the first one eminently practical, inasmuch as Louis, being an alien, was an outlaw in the absence of international copyright; whereas, his step-son was

an American, and could cover their joint work by the safeguard of a copyright taken in his name.

The second reason was the natural desire to help a young author; in this case the closeness of the tie giving even greater interest than that which he evinced, then and after, in the work of his juniors; "to help along the boy," as he put it simply.

Hence, though it was by his voice that we were enthralled, Stevenson's part of the enjoyment was all for the triumph of "the boy"—who indeed at the time was scarcely more.

Quite different was my experience the very next morning. Stevenson had called me into his room, and was again reading aloud, this time the "Letter to a young Gentleman about to embrace the career of Art." I listened with pain and indignation. It was an old quarrel between us, a quarrel which, even to-day, I cannot recall without wonder, that one who, like him, loved as the breath of life every exercise of the artist's faculty, who on every occasion—in this very paper for that matter—lauded the nobility of the only workman left to our modern world who works upon honour, could in the same breath assimilate him with her who sells her honour, and call the artist a son of joy. It was an old contention, one which for years we had debated together, and with Bob.

This old wrangle, conducted, as were all our differences of opinion, with vehemence and conviction, but absolutely without rancour, had never been presented to me in quite such dark colours as that morning at his bedside when he read the "Letter to a Young Gentleman."

But it was in vain that I raged, that I protested that we were not prostitutes, that I arrayed all the arguments at my command. With perfect good humour, but quite seriously, he insisted that he could honestly hold no other view of our vocation, that his conviction had been strengthened by the sudden popularity which had been disclosed to him since his arrival in the United States, which he thought exaggerated, and which, he believed, would be as suddenly withdrawn. His pleasure in his work, he went on to say, was in no wise diminished by his sense of its inferiority to other pursuits; and as he was evidently born to this task and no other, he was willing to accept its pains and its pleasures—to take its rewards and do his best to earn them.

"But," he concluded, "since you feel so strongly upon the subject, we will ask "Scribner's" for a little more space this month, and you can write a rejoinder." At this I was quite abashed. In private, and led on by his contention, I had the full courage of my convictions; but for the moment I could not conceive myself arraying my prose against his in the full light of publicity. The project pleased him greatly, however. He had hoped, in the series of papers, of which this was one, to excite interest and provoke discussion among his readers. The controversy which a few years before he had conducted with Henry James, in the pages of the "Contemporary Review," had produced some such effect; and, for a time, questions of art and literature had as a result been debated pro and con in the public prints. But the readers of "Scribner's" had been mute; save once when, as he afterward humourosly com-

plained to his editor; "a lady sowed my head full of gray hairs by announcing that she was going to direct her life in future by my counsels."

It was in vain that I assured him that of all subjects in the world a discussion on art was much less likely, in the temper of our people, to excite interest or provoke controversy than those treating of conduct and morals in the essays, already published, which had failed in this respect. I also mildly suggested that, while the powers that ruled "Scribner's Magazine" welcomed his contributions, he was somewhat usurping these powers by disposing of valuable space for a friend's polemics—of problematical literary quality. But Stevenson scented the battle afar and would listen to no objection, assuring me that the editor in question would be delighted, and prophesying that the very violence of the attack and the rejoinder—for he begged me to "pitch in with vengeance"—would awaken interest and draw others into the controversy.

I had learned in the school of experience how very little our intelligent people are interested in esoteric questions of art, and knew that Louis misjudged the situation, from the standpoint of one accustomed to the standards of Europe; but I obeyed his behest, and if the editor of "Scribner's" was not precisely delighted when Stevenson coolly announced the arrangement thus concluded, he was, upon the submission of my rejoinder, kind enough to insert it. Our debate did not greatly stir our population.

I heard more or less comment from the brothers of my craft, and at the clubs and meetings where artists congregate, there was little "romantic evasion" in the

opinions expressed concerning my friend's attitude in regard to our common vocation. It was, moreover, generally held by these interested critics that my contrary view was too mildly expressed, and so I feel myself, looking back at it to-day. But it was inevitable that it should differ greatly from the more spirited defence that the first hearing of Stevenson's paper had evoked. I wrote under the shadow of an obsession that in those days was constant whenever I was absent from my friend, an overpowering dread that his presence instantly dispelled, so thoroughly was his own depression kept for his lonely hours, but which laid heavy upon me whenever his cheerful presence was withdrawn. One could not "pitch in with a vengeance" when the joint effort *might* appear after the obituary notices of my opponent! And for the rest, "perplexity in the practice of an unfamiliar art," must plead as an excuse; for I had, and have, such overweening respect for a man who knows his trade that to appear in controversy with a master in letters handicapped what I had to say by the weight of the effort to say it acceptably. This was evidently Stevenson's judgment; for when I showed him what I had written, he grinned and said: "Rather pretty in style, but expressed with less vigour than I am accustomed to from you." Moreover, one of Stevenson's chief assertions was founded on a confusion of terms applied to the party of the first part in certain transactions, which neither of us realized at the time, but which Mr. Richard Le Gallienne discovered later; for the dishonour of the *fille de joie* lies not in pleasure but in its traffic; and eventually Louis was forced to admit that the artist is not a prostitute,

though the "shorter catechist" in his nature would only modify his harsh judgment of our craft by substituting "libertine" for the "romantic evasion" of an uglier word.*

Though we signally failed in arousing these States to a consideration of the status of the artist in our social scheme, this episode was of some personal importance to me and, along with much subsequent writing, is directly responsible for this book.

We had a few visits at Manasquan from chosen friends, notably a day with Saint-Gaudens, who brought his son and, at the request of the sculptor, Stevenson wrote the charming letter to Homer Saint-Gaudens, that may be found on page 125 of the second volume of the "Letters," and which, sealed in our presence, was only opened after the writer's death, though the date of the boy's majority was fixed upon at the time as the humouros ceremony was concluded. Another day I had projected a return to New York, to figure at a dinner given to John S. Sargent by some of his confrères, in recognition of the esteem in which they held him, and in partial return for a royal feast to which he had invited a large portion of the artistic fraternity some weeks before. Stevenson, however, would not hear of my going, even for a day, so closely at the time did he cling to all those near to him, and said authoritatively: "I'll take the responsibility of keeping you, and will send Sargent a telegram to explain it." This was at breakfast, and shortly after, when we were already seated in the boat prepared for a morning excursion on the river, his mother came out

* See "Letters," Vol. II, p. 374.

and said, "Louis, you asked me to remind you that you wished to send a telegram." "Ah, yes," answered the son, tearing a leaf from a pocket-book on which to write it. "We'll send it in rhyme to soften the blow." Then in a moment, he produced the following doggerel, which, as I heard afterward, was read at the dinner:

I have here detained Will Low,
He cannot dine with you:
We send you from the *bord de l'eau*
A cordial how d'ye do.

"You've a devil of a name to rhyme with," laughed Stevenson, as we set out to sail up the river.

XXXV

EXIT R. L. S.

INTO the trivial events of our daily life at Manasquan there was suddenly cast a more serious element; for Stevenson had been called upon to make a decision of the greatest import, though when the question was presented, and on the instant decided, he, no more than those about him at the time, knew that it was the hand of ultimate fate that cast the decisive die. All plans for the immediate future had been adjourned awaiting the return of Mrs. Stevenson from California; or, as the event proved, to be governed by conditions which she might find existing there.

We were at lunch one day when a telegram was brought to Louis, who uttered an exclamation of surprise and then, tossing the yellow paper across the table to where his mother sat, said, "Read that aloud." She passed it to me and I read, in its brief terms, that a serviceable schooner-yacht could be had in San Francisco for a cruise in the Pacific. "What will you do?" was my query, and the answer came at once, "Go, of course." Before we left the table an answer was dispatched, and virtually he, and during his life those nearest to him, "were from that hour the bond slaves of the isles of Vivien."

Quick as had been his decision, it was in no light spirit that he set about completing his arrangements for this voyage; of which the necessary expense was

so much greater than any of the other projects that he had entertained. At the death of his father he had received, as part of his eventual heritage, three thousand pounds, and the decision to risk two-thirds of this on a voyage from which he fully recognized he might never return, was one to be seriously considered; as he had those dependent upon him for whose future he was responsible beyond the term of his life. It was at best a desperate venture, but the decision once taken he applied himself to the composition of a letter to the friend in Scotland who had charge of his business affairs there, directing the withdrawal of two thousand pounds from the capital in his hands. At the conclusion of this task he laid the letter down and, with a revulsion of feeling from the graver aspect of the situation, he fairly chuckled: "I wish I could be there when this letter arrives," and then in broadest Scotch he made imaginary comments of dismay at the sudden dispersion of his inheritance. He lingered over this fanciful picture for a moment and then said in a graver tone, "Well, it's to make or break; and there's the end on't."

A voyage in the Pacific had been already considered in the winter at Saranac and one, who from admiration for the author had rapidly developed sentiments of affection for the man, Mr. S. S. McClure, had, on learning of the project, encouraged the undertaking; professing to be able and willing, by means of the McClure Newspaper Syndicate, to place a series of letters descriptive of the adventures of the voyage for a sum that would suffice to meet its expense. This contract was afterward made binding for the hand-

some sum of ten thousand dollars, and was eventually carried out; but at the moment when his decision for the voyage to the islands of the South Seas was taken, Stevenson felt too uncertain of his health to count with reasonable certainty upon being able to fulfil its conditions.

The die once cast, we continued to sail the placid Manasquan, awaiting the moment of the departure of our friends for California on the first of June. A new interest appeared in the life of Stevenson and his stepson, for they busied themselves at all times of the day, and at intervals of all other activities, in drawing up lists of stores for the voyage. Mild expostulation or computation of the probable storage capacity of a schooner-yacht, had no effect on these dreamers; they calmly proceeded with their interminable lists and scorned the criticisms of a mere land-lubber. All conversation that was not of a nautical character failed to hold their interest, and "Taffrail's" enchanting pages usurped the place of all other literature.

Our quiet life, the open air and, above all, the glimmer of hope that the projected voyage inspired, had worked wonders with Stevenson's physical condition. His main physical activity was still the somewhat passive exercise of sailing, where Lloyd or I usurped what little manual labour fell to be exercised. Toward the end of his stay, however, he had been able to walk a little, though this form of exercise had been limited to short tours inland. One evening, after an early dinner, he proposed an excursion to the sea, and the two of us set out. The distance by land is about two miles and the route lies along a low, sandy road, through

patches of beach grass and over a number of little bridges that cross as many small inlets, where the sea has pushed its way into the level land. It was a balmy spring evening, the day just gone and the stars sparkling faintly overhead as we walked. Stevenson's springy gait went lightly over the yielding roadway and I, solicitous that he should not overexert himself, linked my arm in his, though he would often withdraw his own to punctuate his talk by gesture.

We were speaking of Keats; of his single-purposed devotion to beauty and his equal conviction that it comprised truth, as expressed in the famous concluding lines of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Louis quoted them:

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

"Keats was fortunate," he went on somewhat sadly, "in some mysterious way he belonged to an earlier age of the world, where such belief suffered fewer shocks than it does with us."

"Nonsense," I retorted, "think of his birth and actual surroundings, of the men he knew, his pinchbeck old master Haydon, the seamier side of Leigh Hunt, and the actual state of taste in the England of his day." "There were Wordsworth and Shelley." "Wordsworth whom he admired and respected, but who was at the opposite pole from every intuition of Keats' nature; and Shelley, whom he avoided." "No," I insisted, "mysterious as it is John Keats did belong to an earlier age of the world, but if he looked at the world about him he could well suffer more shocks than to-day, when

The road to the sea

we live in an age which he in part has inspired, and where the men who came after him have continued his influence."

Then I recalled to him a promise contained in one of his letters, to which I turn in order to quote his words correctly. It was written on the receipt of the "Lamia" with my drawings.

"The sight of your pictures has once more awakened me to my right mind; something may come of it, yet one more bold push to get free of this prison yard of the abominably ugly, where I take my daily exercise with my contemporaries. I do not know, I have a feeling in my bones, a sentiment which may take on the forms of imagination, or may not. If it does, I shall owe it to you, and the thing will thus descend from Keats,—even if on the wrong side of the blanket. If it can be done in prose—that is the puzzle."

Thus reminded, Louis said, "Well, as you see, nothing came of it. The 'Master of Ballantrae' is not precisely inspired by Keats." "'The Primrose Way' was inspired by more than my pictures, and is 'a thing of beauty—and a joy forever'" was my prejudiced assertion. "The gratitude of the dedicatee," was the laughing response and then, more gravely, "No, it is not in me, I can do the grim, I can do the Jekyll and Hyde sort of thing, but the trouble with me is that I am at bottom a realist." Here I exploded into wrath, quoting back at him Keats' lines; and demanding if, for a moment, he thought that any work of art represented other than reality, *as the artist saw it.*

"Oh, I know," he replied with a sort of gentle impatience; "your old contention that love and hate, joy

and sorrow, are the primitive qualities of man and the material with which the artist works; that since the world began these simply reappear, and that local conditions, more often than not, enfeeble and distort the typical character which they first assumed in the hands of the Greeks; all that is true enough, but it is the local conditions, the things of the moment and hour that strike the hardest. If it were not for Zola and his gang, who have spoiled the game, I should be a rank realist."

In this he persisted, meeting each contradictory instance which I could cite from his own work, with an exasperating reiteration that none of these had really "come off"; that he had been "feeling his way"; that these were "tries" at various sorts of things—"various sorts of realities," I interposed, "but not done by a man with a note-book and tape-measure." "There is where you mistake," he rejoined eagerly; "that's just what I am really, the man with a note-book."

By this time we had reached the shore and were pacing the sand where the retreating tide had left it firm. Louis stopped suddenly, and put his hand on my arm. "Listen," he said, "and tell me if you think this beautiful."

Then he described, in a way that I wish he might be writing it instead of me, a scene which had impressed him from the window of a railway train, in some of the mining districts in England. It was a black, dismal country, the day was almost spent, as the train wound its way by squalid villages set in a face of nature that was everywhere darkened by the coal dust. Here and there chimneys belched out smoke that trailed like black plumes in the heavy air surcharged with gases from the

furnaces, which flared from time to time, lighting the scene with a lurid copper-coloured gleam that made the ensuing dusk more sinister than before. Scattered over the face of the landscape uprose miniature mountains of the refuse from the mines and furnaces, and upon these, on their peaks and in their valleys, miserable hovels struggled for a foothold. From their doors women looked out, children stopped in their play to watch the passing train or a hulking workman toiled up to what he called his home. There were no trees, no flowers, no sward, nor was there any vestige of the green country in sight, only the stark chimneys and these truncated cones; like the floor of some monstrous cavern of which the overhanging density of the charged atmosphere made a roof. "It was like looking into the mouth of a *cold* Hell," said Stevenson, "even the furnace fires gave no sensation of warmth or cheerfulness."

"Yet," he continued, "in these hovels men and women lived; marriages were consummated; children were born; the man went to his work in the morning, his wife watched from the door for his home-coming at night; the children had their play upon these grimy heaps; and growing up, all the old story of love was repeated; they in their turn, took up life, as their parents; their eyes closed in death, were carried down to be laid in a churchyard;—please God, a green churchyard."

All this and more had he seen from the passing train, for I can only give the merest outline of the finished picture which he, with deliberation, carefully elaborated. I was not a little impressed, but in a moment, our discussion reverted to my mind.

"Have you ever returned to this place with your note-book? I thought not; yet all of this you saw (and felt) in the flash of a train and then, possibly not from one place, but from a whole section of this country, you realized this scene and imagined its significance. How often have I heard you revile Zola, and even more Balzac, for the slow piling up of detail extraneous to the movement of the tale. Don't you remember the morning in the rue Vernier, when I spoke of the impression I had gained of the country through which Alan and David fled in 'Kidnapped,' and your own proud assertion, which you insisted that I should verify from the book, that there was not a line descriptive of landscape in it?"

So far our talk resembled much of the disputatious converse to which we were prone, except for the description that he had given of his glimpse from the train window, which was more studied than his usual careless flow of talk, and in this vein it continued until I made the assertion that in "Treasure Island" he had written a tale of the sea, of ship and island adventures that all the accumulated detail of actual experience would not enable him to surpass.

Frequently we had been as of one mind on these trite questions but that evening, undismayed by the evidence of his past work, Stevenson chose to disagree, and repeated his assertion that, had the realism that was rife in the arts of that time chosen its themes more wisely, its practice would have given new life to art, and he would have willingly served in its ranks. "Zola and his crowd have spoiled the game, or very nearly spoiled it, I'll allow," he continued, "but wait until I

get hold of all this new and splendid material, and you will see that every added truth, every touch of local colour, every trait by which these island peoples resemble or differ from other races, sympathetically studied by one who thinks our civilization is a ghastly farce, will make a fine book."

Our argument had come to an end leaving me—leaving us both, no doubt—quite unconvinced, as arguments will, though it is a fine exercise and one, when conducted in a temperate manner, that harms no one.

The tide was at the flow, the sea had turned once more to its ceaseless task, breaking in foam out upon the bar, foam of dim silver in the starlight, and rising ever nearer in circling shapes to die upon the sand at our feet. We had not spoken for a moment, and alone, we two, upon the beach, the world seemed very large, the sea boundless and the sky without limit, when Louis broke the silence, speaking at first as though to himself.

"England is over there," with a vague gesture seaward; "well, I bear her no grudge though she has cast me out. I cannot live there and—" turning to me almost fiercely— "Low, I wish to live! Life is better than art, to do things is better than to imagine them, yes, or to describe them. And God knows, I have not lived all these last years. No one knows, no one can know, the tedium of it. I've supported it as I could—I don't think that I am apt to whimper—but to be, even as I am now, is not to live. Yes, that's what art is good for, for without my work I suppose that I would have given up long ago, without my work and my friends and all those about me—I am not forgetting them; for, with all the courage I could summon, I

would not be here to-day if all their loving care had not added to my courage and made it my duty to them to fight it out. As long as my father was there I would never think of leaving; all our old troubles were long ago forgotten, and these last years we were much to each other; but when he was laid at rest, I determined to make a new effort to live. Not as we lived at Fontainebleau, for youth was on my side then—remember how you never realized that I was less strong than the other men who were there with us—but to be the rest of my days a decent invalid gentleman. That's not a very wild ambition, is it? But it's a far cry from being bed-ridden. I'm willing to take care of myself, but to keep on my feet, to move about, to mix with other men, to ride a little, to swim a little, to be wary of my enemy but to get the better of him, that's what I call being a decent invalid gentleman and that, God willing, I mean to be.

"There's England over there and I've left it—perhaps I may never go back—and there on the other side of this big continent there's another sea rolling in. I loved the Pacific in the days when I was at Monterey, and perhaps now it will love me a little. I am going to meet it; ever since I was a boy the South Seas have laid a spell upon me and, though you have seen me all these weeks low enough in my mind, I begin to feel a dawn of hope. The voyage here, even with the bad weather off the banks, was life to me, and in a better climate on the Pacific, surely a better life awaits me."

He stopped for a moment and I was too moved to speak. Seldom had he spoken in other than in passing reference of his ailments, never to disclose the utter

weariness that his voice, his gesture and his words conveyed; at the same time that his slight figure, tense with his determination to conquer his ills, imparted a sense of hope, almost a latent certitude that on those far-off seas life as he desired it, awaited him.

After a pause he resumed, in lighter tone, "Yes, it will be horrid fun to be an invalid gentleman on board a yacht, to walk around with a spy-glass under your arm, to make landings and trade beads and chromos for cocoanuts, and have natives swim out to meet you. If this trip really sets me up I'll come back a regular Taffrail and never quit the sea. If it does all that I mean it to do, we will get some magazine to pay the shot and let us do a book together. The Ionian islands, the Greek archipelago, that's more your game. We, too, will live in Arcadia, and listen out for the sirens of Ulysses." I was used to this transition from grave to gay; and not ashamed, but seeking after the manner of our race to hide our emotions, we walked homeward gayly. At the door of the inn his mother met us. "You've been gone a long while," she said; "I was beginning to be anxious." Louis laughed, "I'm not the least tired," he replied, "but we've been quite far. Low and I have been looking out from the shores of the Pacific."

A few days after in New York, Louis said, "Don't see us off on the train. We can't lunch at Lavenue's, but we'll go to Martin's and drink a bottle of Beaujolais-Fleury to our *bon voyage*." So this we did, and so parted.

XXXVI

ECHOES FROM LAVENUE'S, AND A MEMORY OF PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

IT is useless to question the provision of nature by which the future is hidden from our sight. However much the final decision of the Fates may shock us, the steps by which this end is approached are gradual in a backward view, and such steps were the prolongation of Stevenson's voyages, the projects of return, and even his final choice of Samoa as a convenient point from which at Hawaii, Ceylon or Madeira, he could once more reach his friends. Nearly three years had elapsed before this choice was made, and ground was broken for his house at Vailima and, in the interval, none of his friends had realized that they who bade him adieu for a space were to see him no more. Even when it had become evident that he could not leave Samoa without danger, there were none of those who were nearest to him who ceased to cherish some hope of going to him, since he could not come to them.

"Pray you, stoop your proud head, and sell yourself to some magazine and make the visit out," was the message of his very last letter to me; and before this there were those who stood ready to make our mutual desire effective, had not the insistent duties of the day, which in retrospect now seem so trivial, imposed a barrier that, at the time, seemed insurmountable. Mean-

while the events of Stevenson's voyages, the incidents of his life afloat and ashore, came home to me in the shape of letters and photographs. This part of his story is so well known through the published letters, including those specifically known as the "Vailima Letters," that its repetition may be avoided here. Limiting my recital to incidents which were personal between us, I thus bridge a space of four years and come to the summer of 1892.

In the spring of that year my patient hope that I might be employed for some larger decorative work became realized. The commission entrusted me was for a ceiling in the Ladies' Reception Room in the Waldorf Hotel in New York, then in process of erection. Work of this description is generally done upon canvas, which upon completion is securely fastened to the wall, and the dimensions of this particular decoration were such, thirty-four by twenty-six feet, that no studio was obtainable in New York for the execution of my task.

It had also been a number of years since my last visit abroad and, knowing that in Paris I should find every facility for work, there was a double inducement to return there to prosecute my welcome undertaking.

Meanwhile "The Wrecker" was in course of publication in "Scribner's Magazine," and I was deep in the mysteries of its plot. In its earlier numbers I had recognized many of the adventures of Loudon Dodd in Paris as based, with differences, upon experiences that were common to Stevenson and myself. Some incidents came closely home to me; others, of which I had been witness, I had poured into the receptacle of

his retentive memory, while still others were the common knowledge of "the quarter" in our time. All these had passed through the alembic of his imagination sufficiently to remove any trace of violation of private knowledge, and had thus become fairly characteristic of the life he described.

My common knowledge and the pleasant intellectual exercise of penetrating Stevenson's skilful disguisements, had endowed the story with exceptional interest, and one of my last errands before leaving for Europe was to visit the editorial offices of the magazine, and read "The Wrecker" in proof so far as the manuscript had been received from the author. Each month after my arrival in Paris, I had followed the serial publication, until one evening, on leaving my studio there intent upon a walk, it occurred to me that another and the last instalment was due, in which I hoped that the still unravelled mystery of the *Flying Scud* would be solved to the satisfaction of my curiosity.

Therefore I bent my steps to Galignanis, under the arcades of the rue de Rivoli, and purchased the July number of "Scribner's Magazine," which had just arrived. Then I recrossed the river, and took my way to the restaurant Lavenue, where I was to meet my wife, we having decided to desert our remote quarter of Neuilly, where I had found the vast studio necessary for my ceiling, and dine that evening at our favourite restaurant.

On entering the room at the rear of Lavenue's, chance led me to the table where nearly twenty years before, I had sat with Stevenson for the first time. I was the first to arrive and so, having told the faithful

garçon, Paul, that I should await the arrival of Madame before ordering, I turned to my magazine.

On opening it my eye fell upon a page where I read: "Epilogue: To Will H. Low."

Here I must explain. The postal service to and from Samoa was responsible for many sins, but none, to my mind, greater than the loss of the letter in which Louis had offered me the dedication of "The Wrecker." I had learned of this the year before from a letter to my wife, addressed, as was his habit, to his "traducer"; in allusion to her translation of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which was published in Paris by Plon. Nourrit et cie in 1889.

June 19, 1891, VAILIMA.

"MY DEAR TRADUCER:

"In all things it seems you have done very well: the keys have come, but not yet the boxes, nor any word from the perfidious Burlingame. But what am I to say? His letter has probably miscarried, as some of mine have done. For it seems that you have never heard of the arrival of the traduction, which, however, I read with much pleasure and which winks at me with a yellow back as I sit writing. And it seems yet another has gone wrong—my last to your degenerate husband, in which I offered him (in my name and Lloyd's) the dedication of 'The Wrecker,' and gave him an order on Burlingame for the sheets so far as they went. This, I believe even a New Yorker would have answered. The point is this: Loudon Dodd, the narrator of the tale, is drawn a good deal from the degenerate W. H. L.: some of his adventures and some of mine are agreeably mingled in the early parts, and the thing

might seem too near the truth for him to care about the connection. See that he bears this sheet to the truculent Burlingame, by which he (the T. Blgme.) is authorized to communicate "The Wrecker," and do you see that he (the degenerate W. H. L.) answers it. He will start to find himself quite a Taffrail!

"We guess we shan't want the skates much before winter: though I daresay I might use them for razors —they would be as good as what we have. But the lakes in this part of the States don't bear much before Christmas. I am fatuous: enough. I can inflict no more of this rubbish, even on a traducer. And with a thousand thanks for all the horrid bother we have put you to, I say farewell, Yours ever,

"R. L. S."

Hence I was aware that "The Wrecker" was to be dedicated to me, and I awaited its appearance in book form with pleasant anticipation of the apt and well-chosen words in which it would be given, knowing how exceptionally happy Stevenson was in the form of his dedications.

But to be seated in Lavenue's, and to open the pages of the magazine and find the dedication embodied in the form of a familiar letter, coming direct from ultimate Samoa to the very scene of our early association, was a surprise on which Stevenson could not have counted. As for me, I could hardly believe my eyes, as at the conclusion of the epilogue, I read:

"For sure, if any person can here appreciate and read between the lines, it must be you—and one other, our friend. All the dominos will be transparent to your

better knowledge: the statuary contract will be to you a piece of ancient history, and you will not have now heard for the first time of the dangers of Roussillon. Dead leaves from the Bas Bréau, echoes from Lavenue's and the rue Racine, memories of a common past, let these be your bookmarkers as you read. And if you care for naught else in the story, be a little pleased to breathe once more the airs of our youth."

Echoes from Lavenue's, indeed! For a few moments the years slipped away, and it was not hard to imagine that, at the table where I sat, I heard the vibrant voice of my friend and looked into his eloquent eyes as he developed the theory of his story; in the place where he had developed so many theories—he "and one other, our friend."

My wife coming in, we once more read the dedication together, I enjoying her surprise at the winged directness of its coming to greet us there; and later, quite appropriately in Roussillon, but with no little solemnity mingled with its cheer, we drank the health of our friend in far-off Vailima.

It is not alone the closer intimacies and the relations of strongly welded friendships that seem in retrospect to have been influential in one's life or that may claim place in a record like this. To an artist absorbed in his vocation the sight of a single masterpiece, the chance encounter with a master marks a milestone in his career, and to such events his mind in after life continually reverts.

After my arrival in Paris I had discovered that even in that artistically well-ordered city, a studio ample enough to contain an upright canvas thirty-four feet in

height was not easily found. I was almost despairing of my quest when my good friend Madame Foinet, *la marchande de couleurs*, offered her services and, deserting her shop, went among her numerous clients, soon returning triumphant having found a studio sufficient in its proportions to house my projected work. This was situated in Neuilly and was the property of Guillaume Dubufe, the third in generation of a family that has enjoyed celebrity in the arts of France for the past hundred years. Arrangements were soon concluded that gave me temporary possession of this vast studio, where I found ready to my hand movable painting stages and various conveniences contrived for the usage of the decorative painter. One condition M. Dubufe asked me to observe. He had lent the studio to one of his friends, who was making some studies for a large decoration which was to adorn the Préfecture at Lyons and, as these studies were not quite finished, he asked that his friend should be allowed to continue his work while I was preparing for my own. As in the early days of my possession of the studio I found that the temporary occupant was an agreeable companion, and as his work occupied a corner remote from the wall on which I erected my canvas, I begged that he would share the studio as long as he might desire, and, as will be seen, my hospitality was richly rewarded.

The Dubufe studio stood well back from the Avenue du Château at Neuilly, surrounded by a plot of ground and next door to it was a pretty classic structure, also surrounded by a garden which, to my great pleasure, I soon learned was the studio of Puvis de Chavannes. The three men, among modern painters whose work I

have the most admired, are Jean François Millet, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, and Paul Baudry. In France any earnest student can seek men like these without other introduction than a desire to profit by their counsel and be virtually assured of a kind reception. Knowing this, and knowing as well that many profit by this custom, by which, *noblesse oblige*, a great artist is at the service of his humbler brethren, I never sought acquaintance with Baudry, whose direct influence on my work might have been greater than that of either of the others, whose criticism I should have valued beyond that of any man of my time. Nor, despite a most intense desire for the benefit of the advice of Puvis de Chavannes in my decorative undertaking, could I have vanquished a natural diffidence and begged this privilege, had not good fortune served me here, as well as it had done in the case of Millet.

I have said that the work on which my new studio comrade, Louis Edouard Fournier by name, was engaged was for the Préfecture at Lyons. In a decorative arrangement it included the portraits of fifty or more celebrated persons, who by birth or association, have been identified with Lyons since the Roman foundations of that city until our time. For most of these personages recourse was had, so far as portraiture went, to engravings or photographs. The conjunction of these documents with the living model my friend found to be a tiresome task, and one day, pausing in his work, he exclaimed: "Why should I be doing this when next door to us I have a great man, born at Lyons and consequently to figure in my work? I have a good photograph of Puvis, but it would be more interesting to do

him from nature. I believe that I shall ask him." This he did, with the result that our celebrated neighbour graciously consented and, at intervals during a fortnight, passed several afternoons in the studio which, being even more spacious than his own, he characterized as "hardly like a studio, more like a railroad station."

A long time before, at the Salon of 1874, I had been subjugated by the work of Puvis de Chavannes for the first time. "Charles Martel, conqueror of the Saracens," and "Radegonde at the convent of Sainte Croix," decorative panels for the Hôtel de Ville of Poitiers, were his contributions that year, and the reproduction here of these superb decorations bears witness to their quality. It seems strange to-day, in view of the assured position won by their creator in the art of his time, that work like this should have been greeted by an almost unanimous chorus of depreciative criticism. Such, however, was the fact, and the voices raised in defence of the work of the artist were few, albeit I take a certain credit for my early perception in counting my own inaudible protest among the number, and even hesitate to qualify it as inaudible, considering the vehemence of my defence in the forum of the *atelier*, where there was scarce another to do the great decorator reverence.

It was not, therefore, without a certain emotion that I first met the painter of these works, of the "Childhood of Ste. Geneviève" and of the "Sacred Wood, dear to the Arts and the Muses."

The great painter lent himself with all graciousness to the necessities of Fournier's work, taking the position

Ste. Radigonde at the Convent of Ste. Croix

Decoration by Puvis de Chavannes for the City Hall at Poitiers
(Salon of 1874)

required and "holding the pose" in tacit recognition of his duty as a model, but in the intervals of rest he was good enough to manifest much interest in my work. My great canvas, occupying the entire wall at one end of the studio and stretching upwards nearly to its roof, was entirely drawn in and partially covered with its first painting by this time, while I had a completed study on a smaller scale, which gave a definite idea of my final work.

I shall set down here much that M. de Chavannes said, although in so doing I must do violence to my modesty, for all the kind words that he found were accompanied by a most searching inquiry as to the conditions of environment and lighting to which my work was to be subjected in place, and thus they constituted a veritable lesson in decoration, possibly useful for others than the fortunate recipient of his commendation. I am the more emboldened to do this also because, on one of the half dozen or more times when he was in my studio his kindly approval brought to my face some expression of doubt as to its sincerity, I fearing that a desire to be overkind might constitute the motive of his praise. This his quick intelligence evidently caught from my expression, and there was a momentary asperity in his tone as he said: "Believe me, I am quite sincere, *je ne suis pas un vulgaire bénisseur.*" This last expression is difficult to translate, is in fact, almost slang, but it expressed the great artist's denial that he was ordinarily given to overpraise, that he was, literally, "not a vulgar *blesser.*"

Under this potent authority I may, therefore, unblushingly detail commendatory words, which since

that time I have always considered as a quasi-patent of nobility, granted by this monarch of decorative painting. When I had left New York the Waldorf was hardly built above its foundations, and, consequently, I had only the architect's drawings to guide me in my work. This condition first of all excited the surprise of M. de Chavannes; he had never been called upon to work for a non-existent building, but on the contrary, told me that it was his habit to visit the scene of his future labours and there, before the space upon the wall which he was called upon to fill, he sat until, as he expressed it, he "saw" his decoration. He spoke more than once of his "vision," using the term in describing how at the Sorbonne, he had passed several days before the vast hemicycle, which is now covered with the most noble of all his works, until this vision filled the empty space; "and you would be surprised," he went on simply, "if you could see how little my final work differs from the vision that came to me then." I asked him if he returned often to refresh his memory as to the surrounding of his future work, or if his work, once placed, often demanded retouching to ensure its harmony. "Almost never," he answered, "for one who cannot carry these conditions in his memory, and be governed by them throughout his work, had best leave decoration alone." He went on to say that working without other aid than an architect's drawings appeared to him most difficult, and then inquired about my early studies and my experience in decorative work. When I told him that my master was Carolus-Duran he gave a significant smile, for at that time he was President of the National Society of Fine Arts, the Champ de Mars

group, of which my master was Vice-President, and rumour had it that complete harmony did not exist between the two. It was with slight maliciousness, therefore, that he said: "In that case I must say of you, as was said of Courbet: 'pupil of yourself and of nature,' but," he added more gravely, "since you say this is your first large decoration you may be assured that you are a born decorator—*un décorateur né*." This, as I have said, was preceded by a most minute inquiry as to the height from the floor at which my ceiling was to be seen, the colour of the room, the direction and quantity of light it would receive, and the different points from which my work could be viewed, all of which I had fortunately considered, and so felt justified in accepting some part of his approval.

I had taken an early opportunity of describing my youthful admiration of his work, detailing some incidents of a fairly grave quarrel it occasioned, of a personal nature which need not be touched upon here, and adding: "so you see, I broke lances for you, in the ranks of Charles Martel against the Saracens." He laughed and said: "I had need of it, of the good will of all those in favour of my work, for many years before that, and until my 'Ste. Geneviève' was placed in the Pantheon, I was the target for all the arrows of the critical Saracens."

The sittings for the portrait gave me a quiet opportunity to study the distinguished painter, who talked much and well on many subjects. He had great personal charm, and was in all respects as fine an example of the thorough man of the world—essentially *bien élevé*—as it has been my fortune to meet. The dignity

of the position of an acknowledged master, as understood in France, long emerged victorious from the battles of his earlier career, lent weight to his slightest utterance; but he was in no manner pompous or self-assertive. I had heard that he was extremely sensitive to the slightest adverse criticism, and was wont in unsympathetic surroundings to become absolutely mute; but evidently the respectful admiration of the two younger painters created an atmosphere in which the *bonhomie* of his nature shone. In attire he was scrupulously correct without foppishness, his appearance being that of a diplomat of distinction, rather than that of one who worked with his hands. In his own studio, when at work, his faultlessly fitting black broadcloth was put by, and he was clad in a long linen blouse reaching nearly to his feet, giving him with his finely poised head and strongly modelled features a somewhat sacerdotal air, like a priest of the "sacred wood, dear to the Arts and the Muses"; to which his fancy consecrated his devotions. A becoming solicitude as to his personal appearance was amusingly shown by a protest to *l'ami* Fournier. "You must remember that I have two complexions, one for the winter and another for the summer. In this hot weather my face becomes rather red, and I fear that you are accentuating this appearance. In winter I am much paler, and, if you don't mind, I should prefer to be painted, in a work that is destined for posterity, with my winter complexion." Fortunately for me his visits to my studio extended beyond the term of the portrait sittings. He had already received the commission for the work he afterward executed for the Boston Public Library, and was

Charles Martel, conqueror of the Saracens

Decoration by Puvis de Chavannes for the City Hall at Poitiers
(Salon of 1874)

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

a shrewd and interested questioner of the conditions to be found in our country. It was in vain, however, that I urged him to follow his usual custom, and visit the building which his decoration was to embellish. "It is too far and I am too old," was his response to my urging that a week on a French steamer, to be met at the landing by those who knew his work and spoke his language, those who would see that his every moment of sojourn in the new land would be deprived of all possible elements of strangeness, would make the voyage easy.

I was able to tell him much of the hopes and aspirations of art in our new land, and I have never had a more sympathetic listener. Some of these conditions struck him strangely. That I dared accept them, to the extent of undertaking by contract to paint my ceiling in four months, excited his astonishment. "It is the courage of youth," he said, to which I responded that it was rather the courage of necessity. During this summer I also made the sketches in colour for a series of ten large stained-glass windows eventually erected in St. Paul's Church, Newark, N. J. The freedom which our methods of working stained glass permits to the designer, was entirely novel to Puvis who, accustomed to the limitations of the modern glass stainer in France, looked on my sketches with something approaching wonder. "Can you obtain such full colour in a landscape background as you have indicated here," he asked, "and your draperies, how can you carry out your design, as you say, without painting?"

When I explained to him the amazing variety of colour and the myriad forms in which glass is cast, so

that by careful choice from a well-selected assortment the designer seldom fails to find the means of an exact reproduction of his design, leaving only the heads and the flesh of the figures for the painter's brush, he exclaimed that here was virtually a new art and said, almost wistfully, "I wish I could journey to see it, for to paint with colour made transparent by real light must be a joy to the artist."

It was a constant service which this great painter rendered during that summer to his obscure confrère, engaged on a maiden effort, with too little time and less experience for its adequate performance. Whatever merit the resulting work may possess is in no little degree due to the spirit with which his gracious encouragement endowed me. His criticisms and his commendation were alike inspired by the catholicity of his judgment, for the whole character of the Waldorf ceiling is, in style, at the opposite pole from the sentiment of his own endeavour, but in this he was (as I have always found in the greater men of my craft) the better critic for his ability to subjugate his own point of view in the judgment of others. The style of Louis XVI, in which my ceiling was conceived to fit the room for which it was designed, as indeed decorated ceilings in general ("rather than paint a ceiling I should prefer to sweep the streets,"* he had said), could excite but little his personal sympathy, but in the general interest of art, he cheerfully entered into the projects of the stranger and cheered him on his way. At the last,

* In a letter to a friend. Puvis de Chavannes, by Marius Vachon, p. 35 (Paris, Braun Clement et Cie, MDCCCXCV). A sentiment in which every decorative painter will concur—save when the architect will grant no other space.

when my work was finished, I sought him for a final view, and I am not likely to forget his kind expression as he paused at the entrance to my studio, where before the opposite wall my canvas stood. "I congratulate you," he said, "it is fresh; it is Louis Seize; it is like a bouquet of flowers."

XXXVII

A GLIMPSE OF GIVERNY AND OF A DEPOSED FAVOURITE

THIS summer abroad enabled me to make a brief acquaintance with a village community of painters, *circa* 1892, to compare with my memories of Barbizon and Grez of earlier years. The village was Giverny, and as tradition rules that all such communities must have "a master, a pontiff of the arts," Claude Monet, having elected residence there some years before, filled that responsible position. My friend, Theodore Robinson, had been a pioneer in the American invasion, which, upon a brief visit paid him there, I found to be in possession of the village inn. In my student days the young woman votary of art had made but a timid first appearance in Paris, and the leaf-embowered artistic haunts of Fontainebleau knew her not. In the interval that had elapsed since then, however, she had come in numbers so largely plural that the male contingent at Giverny was greatly in the minority. Giverny, as a hamlet struggling along an unshaded road, offers at first glance little that is picturesque. Through the valley which it dominates runs the Seine, and between the village and the larger river winds a small stream, the Epte, with pleasantly shaded banks enclosed between broad meadows gracefully bordered by long lines of poplars. Its greatest charm lies in the atmospheric conditions over the lowlands,

where the moisture from the rivers, imprisoned through the night by the valleys bordering hills, dissolve before the sun and bathe the landscape in an iridescent flood of vaporous hues, of which Monet in his transcripts has portrayed the charm—a beauty which escaped most of the anxious neophytes who were (in the vernacular) "camping on his trail" in the summer of 1892. At a later period when the first vogue of Giverny had departed, and the hamlet had resumed more of its material quiet, I have found the place to be pretty and peaceful, but at the time of my first visit, I own that I should have chosen other adjectives to describe it.

I have already described the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Barbizon, but the imposition of our manners and customs, which were not altogether those of our respective countries, was confined to an assumption of entire freedom, to dress, to act, and to speak as we pleased among ourselves, and there was in other respects, in all our dealings with native guests at the inn or with the painters or peasants of the village, an acceptance of their speech and conformity to their traditions. Above all, none of us would have been so hardy as to interfere with the *cuisine* of Madame Siron, nor, knowing that lady in her prime, could I believe that any such iconoclast would have lived to tell the tale, if he had so dared.

But at the first meal of which I partook at Giverny, Boston baked beans were served! Poor patient Madame Baudy had concocted, under the direction of one of her guests, a *version Française* of this dish at which the codfish in the State House above the Common would have blushed, but the presence of its pretence at

her board was sufficient evidence that the Philistines possessed the land.

So much Robinson confessed; he, the pioneer who, in company with two others, had "discovered" Giverny a few summers before and who now contritely owned partial responsibility for the feminine invasion, as he had unguardedly recommended the place to one or two young women painters in Paris. Next to Monet, he was, indeed, the painter they most looked up to, all these numerous and charming would-be impressionists; but he was so ungallant as to shun their society, having a room in the village, away from the hotel, deserting the *table d'hôte*, and taking his meals in the little café fronting on the street, which, serving as a drinking place for the peasants, was comparatively free from the invasion of the gentler sex.

The *table d'hôte* was, in fact, a bit of transplanted American seaside or mountain summer resort in midweek, when the men folk are busy with their affairs in the city. There were some thirty painter-esses of various ages; and if there were four or five painter-men present they were so outnumbered, and virtually in the shade, that my memory is equally shadowed as to their personality. It was a strange scene to find on the border of Normandy, where every visible surrounding spoke of France, and where the spoken word was alone and exclusively English. With the conversation, however, the resemblance to a summer resort at home ceased, and with the *toilettes* as well, a Française at my elbow reminds me.

The conversation was largely technical, "colour values," "vibration," "decomposition of tones," "the

orange light and the purple shadow," was the burden of their song; and where we, old stagers at Barbizon, had talked of Rousseau, Corot, and Millet, with an afterthought of the Louvre, of Velasquez, Titian, or Veronese, these up-to-date young women were exclusively preoccupied with Monet, and an occasional reference to some picture in the last Salon. Two or three years later, in art-student circles in Paris, Whistler was "discovered," though his masterpiece, the "Little White Girl," is dated 1867; and then "tonality" came to the fore, and the gorgeous palette of Monet was steeped in gloom. Hence it seems fair to infer that the art-student —of either sex—in the lamb-like innocence of youth, shows a sheep-like predilection for assembling in flocks, and following a leader. The particular leader at Giverny in 1892 was much perturbed by his sudden popularity that summer, and secluded himself behind the gates of his beautiful garden, or ventured in the meadows, which had been his own undisturbed painting ground for a number of years, at an early hour of the morning when their precincts were not dotted over by the sketching umbrellas of the fair invaders. The tenets of the so-called Impressionists forbid the relation of pupil to master for that matter, as their motto of "nature seen through individual temperament" would seem to explain. Theodore Robinson, through familiar association with Monet, was, perhaps, as nearly a pupil as the master has known; but the effect upon Robinson's work showed little sign of imitation of manner or theme. Of another, a convinced young impressionist who brought his work for Monet's inspection, the story is told that, after carefully studying

the very evident imitation of his manner, the latter asked:

"This is the way you see nature?" "Oh, yes, that is exactly the way I see nature." "Impossible," retorted the master, "for that is the way I see nature *myself*."

In another year or two the sudden wave of popularity deserted Giverny, and the bevy of student-esses deserted the meadows, and the hill slope saw them no longer, though the village is by no means deserted by its artists, and since those days I have passed a golden summer there, sheltered within garden walls in the gracious society of a *châtelaine* and two charming *filleules*.

The *cuisine* of the hotel Baudy has resumed its traditions, with hardly a memory of its strange deviations in the direction of the American pie and Boston baked beans, the peasants congregate in the little café on the road to play dominoes and drink *petits verres*, and the guests, fewer in number, talk shop—paint shop—and discuss newer names of artists more modern in the long dining-room. Giverny has thus seen its day in one sense; but, until the Seine ceases to flow or the sun to shine over the misty meadows, it will still attract the painter as not the least interesting of the many artist haunts of *la belle France*.

Let me, to conclude this episode, hasten to say that this glimpse of the invasion of a French village by compatriot amazons of art must not be construed as a reflection upon the woman-artist in general. In the past, the present, and very certainly in the future, woman has and will express her nature by art, with

adequate technical mastery, in directions subtle and characteristic that are closed to man, and her place in the art of the world is already beyond dispute.

One other chance encounter toward the end of my summer in Paris comes back, laden with a moral of the futility of an artist's popular success. On my various visits to France I had never sought to renew my acquaintance with Munkacsy, and during his visit to the United States I had deliberately avoided meeting him. Not that I felt the least rancour for his ill-judged advice to me in my first year at Barbizon, or that I failed to admire his work within certain limits. But in Paris he was upon the top wave of success, and during his spectacular visit to New York he was so thoroughly exploited by a picture dealer that I chose to forego the dubious pleasure of a superficial renewal of our acquaintance for the more certain comforts of a quieter life. Naturally, having known him almost upon a footing of intimacy in my early sojourn at Barbizon, I had followed his career with interest. Fortune, artistic and material, had smiled upon him. No painter of foreign birth has, in the past century, received more honour at the hands of the French; successive medals in the Salon, a medal of honour at the Universal Exposition of 1878 and a grand prize at that of 1889, had been followed by the cross of Commander in the Legion of Honour in 1890. From the first, the dealers had fought for his pictures, and marriage had increased his wealth and social position. He had a magnificent house in the rue de Lisbonne with a studio that was one of the show places of Paris, and in every way he seemed marked as one of Fortune's favourites. Stories were

told of visits to his native land where, in Budapest, the populace unharnessed the horses and drew his carriage through the streets in a burst of enthusiasm for their compatriot of world-wide fame. His origin was of the humblest; his very name, that of the village of Munkacs in Hungary, was said to denote that he was a foundling, and the story of his rise from a carpenter's bench to artistic eminence lent him a romantic interest with which his great stature, strongly marked features, and impetuous manner comported well. His earlier pictures of peasant life had been succeeded by a series depicting sumptuous interiors, largely painted from his own surroundings, animated by figures in modern dress. These had their vogue with collectors and dealers for a time, and then to continue his success, came the large canvases of Biblical subjects, which were exhibited throughout Europe and whose triumphal procession through our own country can hardly be forgotten to-day.

The artistic appreciation of Munkacsy had hardly kept pace with his popular and material success, however, and artists and critics, once loud in his praise, had for a number of years looked coldly upon his work, and each successive Salon no longer marked a triumph at the time when, by chance, I met him one morning as I was on my way to my studio.

The manner of our meeting was somewhat amusing. I was just about to cross the Boulevard Bineau, at the point where it traverses the Avenue du Château at Neuilly, when a tram car stopped on the boulevard to permit a tall gentleman to alight from it. As the car once more started up the boulevard I saw that a woman

was running from the opposite direction, along the avenue, wildly gesticulating to stop the car, at which the passenger who had just alighted turned and joined with cry and action in the effort to attract the attention of the conductor who, with arms folded, stood on the rear platform, with his back turned to both the late and the prospective passenger. As I happened to catch the conductor's eye, it was easy to make a sign, at which he promptly rang the bell and stopped the car. Smiling at this little comedy, I crossed the boulevard, and then saw that in his agitation the tall stranger had dropped a portfolio, whence had escaped a number of drawings which he was now stooping to recover. As I came nearer and he rose before me, face to face, I recognized Munkacsy. I had not seen him to speak with him, since 1876, and in the lapse of sixteen years my appearance had so greatly changed that there was no answering recognition in his look, as he thanked me for my efforts on behalf of the unknown lady who was now recovering her breath seated in the slowly disappearing tram car.

To his evident surprise, by way of answer, I asked him if he could remember me. He looked at me intently with a puzzled air until I mentioned my name and that of Barbizon and then, true to his impetuous nature, he almost embraced me.

"But where have you been all this time; why have I not seen you since the Barbizon days?" I gave him a brief account of myself and then told him that I was at work near by. "At Dubufe's studio," he repeated, "why, I had it a few years ago. It was there that I painted a ceiling for the entrance hall of the new art

museum at Vienna." I told him that I knew that, and was conscious of the honour of succeeding to so distinguished an occupant of the studio as he. "And what are you doing in Dubufe's studio?" "A ceiling also, for a new hotel in New York." "May I come and see it?" he asked; his tone seemed almost eager. "I should be greatly honoured," I began, but he interrupted me, "Yes, yes, but when may I come, now—may I accompany you?" Of course I assented, very sincerely flattered, yet not a little puzzled by the strange insistence of his tone. We shortly reached the studio, where my work was nearly completed. Years before, as I have related, Munkacsy had greatly complimented my earlier work, but I could hardly exaggerate the terms of approval that my ceiling now elicited from him. Upon his part, indeed, there was an exaggeration of terms (which I better understood before the morning was over) that would have been almost offensive, had I not failed by the closest scrutiny to discover aught save the most simple sincerity in his expression as he lavished his extravagant praise. His encomiums returned, however, again and again to dwell upon the clarity and lightness of tone of my work, and more than once he repeated: "Yes, I remember you were painting much lighter than the other men at Barbizon when you were there. It is evidently easy for you while I, I paint black, my work is heavy, it is the bitumen. Bitumen has been my ruin, every one tells me so." Surprised at his frankness, I murmured some polite denial, and spoke of the richness of tone he obtained, but he cut me short repeating: "*Non, non, faire clair, il n'y a que ça.*"

Then turning to me he said: "You know I've built myself a studio for decorative work as big as this, and near by. You must come and see me." "With great pleasure, when are you there?" "But you must come now, *toute de suite;* you must come with me." His tone here was almost a command, but remembering that I had formerly known him to be impatient of restraint in his work or his pleasures, I started out with him. Munkacsy's studio at Neuilly was, if possible, even larger than the one that I occupied; but, whereas mine was an admirable work shop, with every convenience for work but devoid of luxury, his was fitted with hangings of the most expensive nature, and the whole aspect of the studio was fairly palatial. A well-trained servant stepped forward to remove our coats, and drawing forward chairs, we seated ourselves.

The work on which Munkacsy was engaged was a frieze for the Parliament house in his native country, representing the subjection of the savage tribes of Hungary by Arpad, a national, though perhaps legendary, hero. It was about sixty feet in length by probably fifteen feet in height, and stretched diagonally across the immense studio. Munkacsy began at once. "I have been ill, I have been very ill, but I am determined to make this my best work, and above all to make it light in tone." Then calling two servants he directed them to set up the sketches for the work. They were three in number and painted to a quarter-scale, were each fifteen feet long—formidable canvases in themselves.

"There," he resumed eagerly, "that is the first sketch *C'est de l'acajou*, it is like mahogany; and then

I was ill for a long time. Then I made the second one there; that is lighter, is it not? But it was not light enough, so I've made a third still lighter. And I hope that the big canvas may be yet lighter for, *faire clair, voyez-vous, il n'y a que ça.*"

There was in effect a progression toward whiteness, if not of lightness, in the three sketches; but if, without being unduly technical, I can explain that as, in his usual work, the painter employed his rich bituminous tone as the basis of his picture, so, in these later examples, he had to some extent essayed to use white. The resulting consequence was that the entire composition appeared chalky rather than luminous, and, that lacking the contrast of the strong, dark masses customary in his work, the tones of his flesh and draperies were heavy and leaden. Of the three sketches I preferred the first which he had apparently rejected, and with some hesitation suggested that perhaps a retention of certain of the more sombre tones would give greater brilliancy to the lighter passages. At this he reflected a moment, and then repeated: "No, no, light, there's nothing but that; and besides, they reproach me with my bituminous tones. Every one is painting light for the Salon; oh, much more than they used to do. No, I *must* paint light." There ensued a long pause, Munkacsy gazing fixedly at his great canvas which was only partially covered. Suddenly he broke out in a tone whose memory still haunts me, so dejected and hopeless it seemed to be, to come from one so favoured by fortune, so visibly surrounded by the evidence of his long-sustained success.

"You don't live in Paris, you have never known a

Salon success; you are fortunate. It is pleasant, every one praises you, it is *cher maître* here, and *cher maître* there, and year after year it goes on until it becomes a necessity of your existence. Then they begin to pick flaws; my Hungarian pictures bored them, so I gave them Parisians; and then they called my work upholstery, and said that I was a creature of the dealers and incapable of affronting *la grande peinture*. Then I did my "Christ before Pilate"; *un vrai succès*, with the public at least, and with the artists, too, though some hung back. And then they began to reproach me with painting dark, and since then there has been no peace. It is like being thrown to the wild beasts; for what does it matter if the dealers clamour for my work, they, too, will stay away before the critics get through with me. Even now I hear whispers that my painting is only suited to Vienna or Budapest, and some day I may be obliged to retire there when Paris has sucked me dry. But you see I must paint light, or adieu to the Salon."

He ceased his tirade, but its tone was so weird and unnatural that before he had ended I was as convinced that his reason was unbalanced as when, not many months after, confirmation of the conviction formed that day came, when he was taken to a sanitarium. His open confession to one who had become a stranger and who, as I was on the point of leaving Paris he was little likely to see again, seemed to relieve his mind, and he became more restrained and quiet, talking on general subjects and recalling our Barbizon days with evident pleasure.

At last I left him, and as I returned to my own

studio, I thought, as my eyes fell on the work shop of Puvis de Chavannes, of the contrast between these two Parisian existences; both equally typical of the many-sided city:

Puvis de Chavannes working alone and unsustained, save by his high purpose, until the age of fifty, before success came to his door; the modest success of being permitted, largely at his own expense, to paint his "visions," and find places on the walls of his country's monuments made ready to receive them. Largely at his own expense was this alone possible, and fortunate it was that a small patrimony enabled him to multiply these masterpieces, for none of them were ever paid a sum sufficient to cover the expense of their execution. No commission for the decoration of a private house, at a generous recompense, was ever offered him, it may be inferred by the absence of such an achievement in his known works. The only adequate compensation that he ever received was the fifty thousand dollars which our fortunately opulent country afforded for the work in the Boston Public Library. Him I had seen that summer, rich only in years and honour, happy and contented in his work and with his lot.

The other, the lesser man, fickle Paris had acclaimed on his first appearance, had showered upon his facile work gold and honours which in his hands had turned to dross and discontent; and then demanded more than he could give.

Again, as many times before, came the thought of the loaf and contentment therewith that alone comports with the essential well-being of the artist.

XXXVIII

A LINK BROKEN—OTHERS TAKEN UP

SO prone were the journals of the time to fill their columns with reports concerning Louis Stevenson, reports more often than not fictitious, that he had laid an injunction on all his friends never to believe anything printed about him without confirmation from himself or his family. Hence, though the blow was severe, to open the paper one morning and find the report of his death, it was not till later, when the circular letter written by Lloyd Osbourne came, that persistent hope ceased whispering that this, like previous reports, was false. With the story of that last day, the third of December, 1894, so circumstantially and feelingly described by his step-son, in my hands, doubt was no longer possible, but realization was still far off. Not days alone nor weeks were to pass; it has hardly ceased to-day, without the thought arising, when some problem of conduct, art, or letters came to my mind, "What will Stevenson have to say to this?" Others, very near and dear, have gone and the place they filled has remained vacant; but, with the cessation of his life, an abiding sense of his continued activity remained, and the grave on Vaea mountain has failed to emprison his spirit. It is well to be precise at this point, for I have rarely felt myself more misunderstood than when, upon some assertion of this description, an amiable gentleman, whose spiritualistic belief I ignored, offered to

put me in actual communion with my departed friend. Nothing so occult—or material—was in my mind; but rather a survival of habit engendered by his influence, so daringly speculative, so generously illuminative, that it was difficult to realize that "a wilful convulsion of brute nature" could arrest it.

Many readers of Stevenson have testified to the continuity of his influence, to a greater degree, perhaps, than that of any writer of our time, and it is but natural that others, who shared personal intimacy with the man, should retain a sense of his spiritual presence that has far outlasted his life. The remoteness of Samoa had already endowed the uncertainties of our correspondence with a sense of telepathic communication, on my part at least; and something of this has mercifully survived.

It was some recognition of this sentiment that lent a sense of the merely temporary absence of Louis to the conversations with his mother in Edinburgh the following summer; and later, when I rejoined Bob in London, and saw him constantly for a space of three weeks, we tacitly agreed that our former companion was hardly further removed than he had been since he had vanished beyond the sunset to his far-off tropic island. They were brave hours that I passed with Bob.

With others, with one above all, of whom more hereafter, there was a shadow of depreciation, indefinable, half jealous, of the writer whose universal recognition had grown since he had left England, appreciated by the few, but, to the greater public, merely a young author emerging from obscurity. With Bob there was naught of this. For the comrade of his youth, for the friend of

later years, there was more than cousinly affection. He retained the exact relation, which had subsisted and was shared between us, since our earlier days; a friendship that no elevation would remove beyond our touch, that no inconsistency could loose from our hold; a temperate, sane and human bond, welded by common faith in gallant and sustained effort, and common charity for casual and temporary failure.

Concerning the artist and his works we were likewise in accord, esteeming, even above the merit of his varied production, the spirit that had led him in so many directions over the fair field of letters, and thus enabled him to escape the thraldom of specialization, in which so much of our literature and our art is bound. This we held to be the essential quality of the true artist, when, as in his case, the interest of the theme was coupled with the capacity of expression, the sufficiency of the craftsman who paints his miniature with another touch than that with which he attacks his panorama. Better, we believed, in common I think with all who knew the man, to have left his "great work" undone, than to have failed to give the world the spectacle of the artist of wider scope to whom: "The world is so full of a number of things," that prose and poetry, romance of adventure, romance of character, essays on life, conduct, or art, impressions of travel, remembrances of childhood, twice-told tales of ancestral worth, or the modest biography of his teacher and friend, must one and all yield something of their honey to the insatiable and industrious bee that buzzed in his bonnet. And, like others, we doffed our bonnets to the noble fragment of "Weir of Hermiston," and believed

that the hive had been shattered at the moment when it was about to give up its richest store.

Under the spell of old habit, we took sides against Louis upon certain points. One of these would seem to savour of ingratitude on the part of a dedicatee, if the contention had not arisen in his lifetime, and had not been debated between us, and if Bob had not confirmed his views by a passage in a letter found among his papers after his death, a letter addressed to Mrs. Low, and for some reason never finished and never sent until it reached us, like a voice from *outre tombe*. It is undated but it evidently preceded the death of Louis.

"I have only just read 'The Wrecker,' owing to the miscarriage of the copy Louis sent me. I think he misunderstands and undervalues the glimpses of the life he saw in Paris. Miserable wretched Briton as I was, penetrated with base Anglicism, unbeknown to me, when I was there, now it is in the past I recollect it differently."

So also, as is evident in these pages, was my recollection of Gallic influences and I had taxed Louis with allowing the upper hand to the "shorter catechist," in his consideration of Parisian student life. In reply he had written:

"About 'The Wrecker'—rather late days, and I still suspect I had somehow offended you; however, all's well that ends well and I am glad I am forgiven—did you not fail to appreciate the attitude of Dodd? He was a fizzle and a stick, he knew it, he knew nothing else, and there is an undercurrent of bitterness in him."

It seemed to me then, as it still appears to me, that

on every occasion when Louis was able to base his observation on experiences of his own, as in the delightful pages of his essay on "Fontainebleau—Village Communities of Painters," he was appreciative, without flattery, and critical without injustice to the life that was led and to the characters of the actors therein. In the Paris scenes of "The Wrecker," or rather in their reflective portion, he speaks in the more conventional tone of an outsider and, in point of fact, he had mingled less in the Parisian life of the student than he had known him in his holiday time in the country, and depended more on information at second-hand, and on the common reports of the quarter. In the early days, but after my return home, Bob had continued his acquaintance with some of my French friends, especially with Gaudez who, all in all, embodied the view of life and art from the Gallic standpoint better than any man I ever knew, and under this influence the Anglicism of his appreciation had been modified. Louis had lacked this corrective of the prejudices that for centuries have divided the neighbours across the Channel; and, though of the two cousins he was by nature the least of a Briton, he permits Loudon Dodd, fizzle and stick though he may be, to speak occasionally with the voice of Samuel Budgett.

Life, so long as life remains, has always a present and a future; nature heals the scars of winter with a new growth of flowers; and though this reminiscent mood was frequent in our converse, the present had interests no less keenly felt. At our first meeting Bob had learned that I had not visited the Royal Academy Exhibition then open, and eagerly suggested that I

should first see it in his company. He had a reason for this, he averred, and so we appointed a meeting for the following morning, to which he was punctual. Begging me to resign myself to his control he led me rapidly through the galleries until we stood before the portrait by John Sargent of "W. Graham Robertson," then a young æsthete and artist of the London world. This depicted a tall young man, encased in a frock coat of exaggerated length, reaching nearly to the feet. The background was neutral in tone, the indication of a portfolio on its stand emerged from the shadow and, lying on the floor back of the figure, was a large French poodle fantastically shorn. One hand of the figure rested on a cane, the handle of which was a vivid blue stone, presumably lapis lazuli, which, together with the head of the portrait, gave its only notes of strong colour; the coat, the background and the poodle being tones of black in exquisite value and truth of gradation. The portrait ranks high among the better-known works of Sargent, and we stood before it for a long time, exchanging words of appreciative admiration. Then, by quick transition, I was led before "Flaming June," by Sir Frederick Leighton. This is also well known among its authors' works, and is as antithetical to Sargent's painting as can be imagined. A maiden of the Anglo-Greek type, familiar to the production of this painter, sits in a languorous attitude, her body bent upon itself almost describing a circle. Her draperies, broken into little rippling folds, are brilliant orange in colour and the scheme of the picture runs the gamut of yellow tones, harmonious and rich, which with the form, drawn with the chastened perfection of this master,

make up a striking picture of decorative aspect. Here again, influenced by different motives, we could sincerely admire.

"Now," said Bob at the conclusion of this experience, "we can look at the rest of the show. I wished you to see these two pictures first, *for these two gentlemen know their trade;* each in his way, of course, but as there is nothing rarer in England than this full capacity, it was worth while to begin with these."

With this preamble we gave ourselves up to the inspection of the exhibition, returning there twice on other days and finding, despite this drastic introduction, much that interested us. My friend's comments were to me not the least interesting, and I noted the growth and broadening of his sympathies in art no less than the happy turns of expression which, if I could remember, would supply a running comment on the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1895, less formal but no less informed than that which had already appeared in the periodical which he served as critic.

Before Millais's melodramatic "Speak! Speak!" the apparition of a young woman visiting her lover at the midnight hour, Bob sighed: "Truly British art, a touching anecdote—poetry for the middle class."

The comment particularly amused me, for a few days before I had passed an interesting afternoon in the company of Sir Henry Tate, in his house at Park Hill, Streatham Common, where were gathered the pictures of the collection which he had presented to the nation, awaiting the erection of the gallery where they, in company with the works of the Chantrey collection, are now to be seen. The generous donor had explained to

me his simple incentive for making this gift to the nation, as a desire to provide for the English middle class a collection of contemporary art, such as the Luxembourg secured for the French.

Naturally the "middle class" in England embraces a larger number than the phrase appears to limit to an American, and the appeal of the works in the Tate collection, like those of the Royal Academy Exhibition, is sufficiently broad, while the view of these last galleries crowded by an interested throng during a long period of exhibition is a spectacle grateful to one accustomed to the limited attendance of our exhibitions in New York. It was less before the pictures possessing these qualities of popular success that we lingered during our visits; but, in other works, we found much that was interesting. One of these, a spirited and well-painted picture had, in addition to these qualities, a personal interest. It was one of the contributions to the exhibition painted by our old friend—the votary of the wild West—Arthur Lemon, and depicted the escape of an ancient Briton from a party of his enemies. His horse has swum a river and with frantic effort climbs the nearer bank, his rider crouching low upon his back to avoid the arrows of his pursuers, hot upon his trail. The artist had persuaded Bob to pose for the principal figure, his type answering admirably for its character, and the result was a quite recognizable portrait of our friend. The catalogue gave its title as "Hard Pressed," but in a restricted circle it was known as "The Escape from Liverpool," in allusion to an incident of Bob's career.

Through the influence of friends, Bob had been in-

duced to accept a professorship of art in the University College at Liverpool, a place for which, in many ways, he was admirably fitted. I have never heard the story from the point of view of the University collegians, which might be interesting, but Bob's version bordered on the pathetic. "I thought I might hit it off," said he, "when I thought of all that my experience would count for with a class of students really interested, and shut up in a big commercial town, without knowledge of all that I have seen. I knew it would be principally lectures, for nothing like the talks Duran used to give us, prompted by work actually in progress, was proposed. But what I found was that, in addition to my definite work in the college, I was expected to wear a high hat and a carnation in my buttonhole, and talk mild gossip about Botticelli, Burne-Jones and Frith—actually Frith—at garden-parties and afternoon teas. And then there were a lot of pedagogues—duffers who talked about 'schools,' and attributions to this and that master —and queried about dates, and the *cinque-cento*, and that rot—and their wives, who wished to uplift the working classes by means of art, dear good ladies, of course, but—well, I held out as long as I could* and then I simply cut it, for no human being could have stood it any longer." I could get no clearer information of the actual work of his course, the remembrance of garden-parties and afternoon teas overshadowed the whole experience, and so Bob had ceased his visits to Liverpool and remained in London, where his illuminating talk on art had a larger, and undoubtedly more appre-

* Mr. Balfour fixes this period at four years—1885 to 1889—a tribute to my friend's steadfastness. "Life of Robert Louis Stevenson," Vol. I, p. 104.

ciative audience, and where later, Lemon's picture fittingly commemorated in allegorical fashion this episode of his chequered career.

As usual I can give but little semblance of reality to the recital of these last glimpses of my gifted friend. The attempt to describe events from day to day would result in a mingled catalogue of the National Gallery and other art exhibitions, and descriptions of long stations at tables, in his house or at various restaurants, where the repasts were fittingly modest and the talks copious. One such station was, I remember, at the Café Solferino, a place typically French in its faded red-and-white decorations, which enjoyed some popularity with a certain society in London for a time, where our déjeuner was prolonged by talk until diners began to arrive, when, still interested, we remained to dine and pass the evening—a record of some ten or twelve hours during which time the solids of bodily sustenance were greatly exceeded by those of spiritual refreshment—in a strictly literal sense. The words we used, or rather, those I listened to, during these hours, have fled, but not the memory of the kindly face, the eager manner, nor the firm conviction that I would not, at the time, have exchanged the privilege I was enjoying at the Café Solferino for that of participation in the historic gatherings of the Mermaid.

One other meeting—that with Henley—was ushered in by an absurd misunderstanding. There had been an occasional interchange of letters following our first acquaintance, but after Stevenson's leaving England it had ceased. "Now that Lukin is away I have little to write about," was the plaint of one of these letters, and,

in another is a forecast of the future, which sounds strangely in the face of eventual occurrence. "I expect it will end in Louis taking out his papers. In which case we shall all follow suit and become American citizens (like Dion Boucicault and the Jersey Lily) in a body. God forbid the necessity, of course, but it looks like that a little. Anyhow, I behold myself, with the mind's eye, crossing the plains next year to Colorado (having previously taken tea at Washington Square North) on collaboration bent. I want him to collaborate in public and make money that way, but we've not yet arranged the details."

I knew that it was to a Henley somewhat removed from sympathy with our lost "Lukin," that I announced my arrival in London, and my desire to see him, but his answering note was thoroughly cordial. He was living outside of London, at Barnes-on-the-Thames, was not very well and came but seldom to the city. We were, therefore, sure to find them at home, the note went on to say; luncheon was served at one and dinner at seven where we could always find place, and, without notification in advance, we must come as soon as possible and spend as much of the day as we would.

I was prevented for three or four days from acting on his invitation, but one morning we saw the greater part of the day free before us and so sent Henley a telegram announcing that we projected coming immediately after luncheon. It was a fine, sunshiny day and, early in the afternoon, reckless of cab hire, we hailed a hansom, whose horse seemed good for the seven or eight miles to Barnes, and started on our way. When we arrived before the house, prettily situated on

the river bank, some prescience prevented my paying the cabby until we had knocked at Henley's door. "Not at home," was the disconcerting announcement of the trim maid. It appeared that early in the morning Mr. and Mrs. Henley had gone to the city and would not return until late in the evening. I put a final query, "Do you happen to know if Mr. Henley received a telegram this morning?" "Oh, yes, sir, they were discussing going to London at breakfast, and when the dispatch came Mr. Henley said, 'that settles it', and they went away soon after."

We regained our hansom and I will forbear to disclose to my readers comments on British manners, that may have been indulged in on our way cityward. It all seemed incomprehensible, for the kindliness of Henley's note had prepared us for a resumption of our old pleasant relations, and cordial hospitality had ever been one of his chief virtues. The chill of a lost illusion seemed to penetrate our very spirits as we lingered over our dinner at the Café Royal, contrasting it with the very different scene in which we had hoped to figure, and finally we reached our hotel about nine o'clock. I was greeted by the clerk.

"Telegram here for you, sir, came this morning." I tore it open, and read: "Called to London unexpectedly. Meet us at Verrey's. Dinner seven sharp. Henley."

To jump into another hansom and speed the driver to Verrey's was the work of a very few minutes. With our arrival there, at the name of Henley, visible gloom seemed to dissolve from off the *personnel* of this antique establishment which, at the time, was the most

characteristic of the better class of French restaurants in London. From the *chasseur* at the door, by the hands of various waiters, we were conducted hastily and with evident relief, on naming our errand, into the presence of Henley and his wife, seated in a private room over the remains of what had apparently been a most elaborate dinner, for the ordonnance of a *dîner fin* was a quality of which the poet was justly proud. Seated at the table, his collar undone, with his tousled hair and the gleam of his blue eyes, Henley had the appearance of a genial ogre, smacking his lips after a toothsome morsel of fairy prince. As the door opened, apologetically, and I appeared, all explanations were cut short by the roar which he emitted, and for some seconds I stood there, listening to a torrent of words, in which my character, my person, my native land, and some shrewd prophecies of my future were volubly and whimsically intermingled. Explanations of our absence from our hotel since morning were finally accepted though our final pardon for having lost a dinner, upon whose merits Henley touched in passing, was only granted in the end, by the promise to pass the next day with them at their house.

At this period Henley enjoyed considerable influence in London, at least with a number of the younger men. He had eminent qualities for leadership, an unhesitating certainty of conviction, an implacable honesty of judgment, coupled with a high ideal of letters; and, best of all, a stimulating generosity of appreciation for work of promise. London, to my superficial view, has always appeared to be divided in its literary and artistic sympathies into at least as many parochial divisions as

its vast territory is municipally subdivided. Consequently when one frequents a certain set of men, relations with all others appear to be debarred. With one such group at least, whose voice found larger issue in the publications of the time, Henley held a high position, if indeed he might not be counted the leader.

Whether his generosity of appreciation extended, among the living, to those who were clearly his superiors in influence, or whose qualities might be weighed in the balance with his own, is more open to question. It was virtually impossible to temperately disagree with him; argument in his hands was a bludgeon to silence the opponent who, when rendered mute by such methods, was apt to be cherished as one won over to a righteous cause. To this I attribute the apparent domination which at one time he exercised over Stevenson, who, in another way, was equally tenacious of beliefs which, when the tie of constant association was severed, took their unimpeded course, and before the end of his life had carried him far beyond the influence —and regretfully beyond the sympathy—of Henley.

Under his own roof at the time of this visit, silenced by the recent death of Louis, and perhaps somewhat abashed by my loyalty, there was little premonition of the discordant utterance, provoked by the publication of the "Letters" and by Graham Balfour's biography, whose testimony confirmed for Stevenson so high a position in the world of letters that the defalcation of Henley's debt of gratitude to the man, and his renunciation of faith in the artist, created only a nine days' wonder, and can now be mercifully forgotten. This much must also be remembered that Henley at the

time was a stricken man, wounded nigh to death in his dearest affections by the loss of an only child, and blighted by physical suffering that from his young manhood had relentlessly pursued him, crippling his body and, perhaps, distorting his mind. At the most, in his talk with me that day he expressed a gruff, but half-humorous depreciation of what he called "Yankee enthusiasm." To this he attributed a vein of self-consciousness which he claimed to discover in Stevenson's later work. "We"—the Yankees—"had taught him to take himself too seriously, had given him too great an audience and tempted him to side with conventional belief in order to retain it." I could only reply that if Louis had given himself up to "preaching"—the word was Henley's—the "Christmas Sermon" and "Pulvis et Umbra" were hardly the discourses of a popular occupant of a fashionable pulpit; and of other of his writings, the prayers which had been eagerly appropriated by sectarians with rejoicing at his return to the doctrinal fold—he knew, as well as I, that some of those who were the most convinced of his conversion to their tenets, would have been the most surprised could they have held a half-hour's converse with him on the basis of any narrow—of almost any orthodox—belief. To me there never has appeared the slightest inconsistency, in any of these utterances, of the later life of the man who amended Fleeming Jenkin's dictum that "we are not here to be happy, but to be good," by, "not to be happy, but *to try* and be good," in comparison with any act or utterance of his earlier days. Henley still held out that there had been a change, that the freedom of his earlier views had been fettered, and that the Louis

we had known in our youth was other than he, who (to him) had become as remote as was his grave in Samoa. Our talk became painful and Henley ended it with a last word in a tone of regret through which transpired a vague jealousy that he should have been less favoured than I. "You had the best, and only the best of Louis. You knew him at a time when he most enjoyed life, a life of which he talked to me when I was lying ill in Edinburgh. He was always happy in France, and when I saw you meet together in my room in the Hotel Jacob, you met on the footing of youth. So it is in all the letters Colvin has printed and, somehow, so it is with you to-day, and apparently to the end you retained all this."

On other subjects we were more agreed. Of Bob he had the highest opinion, and even seemed disposed to rank his gifts above those of Louis, though this was a comparison which I evaded as speedily as I could. He deplored with vigorous language his lack of ambition exclaiming, "Confound him, if the beggar would only work," and first praised the merit of the Velasquez, of which Bob had only shown me the proofs of the photogravures, made for the first quarto-edition, speaking so slightingly of the text as to make me think his work merely expository of the plates. "Yes," Henley repeated, "if the beggar would only work or was the least ambitious"; and then, with his most dogmatic air (which absurdly enough, such was the force of the man, carried temporary conviction), and with passing reference to a prominent feature of my face, he added: "Why, Low, if Bob only had your nose, instead of his little lady-like excrescence, he would be the greatest man in England."

We sat upon a balcony of his house overlooking the river a good portion of the afternoon, I no more than comfortable in the dubious warmth of the clouded sun, clad in a light overcoat; Henley, comparing the heat to the nether regions, his shirt open at the neck, his great chest bared to the breeze, and there he held forth, discoursing on many subjects, often cynically enough, but with a latent kindness in his eyes that was a constant reminder that his bark was worse than his bite. I thought of Landor who may thus have sat on a balcony at Fiesole, overlooking Florence, and barked his message to a world that he could not control. At dinner we were joined by other friends of Henley, of one of whom a chance acquaintance of that night would beg that he may prolong the "Golden Age"—whenever the "frivolous mercantile concerns" of the Bank of England permit, and the talk became more general. One characteristic word of Henley's survives in my memory. We were speaking of the ill-starred Oscar Wilde, and I asked our host if his reputation as a brilliant talker was well founded. "Clever?" Henley ejaculated, "I should say he was. Seated where you are he has held this table against *me*, more than once."

I would not leave my reader with the impression that this high opinion of his own powers was simple self-sufficiency. In addition to his undisputed talent many circumstances of his career had lent him authority and, though his kingdom was small and its population changeable by frequent emigration, a certain proportion of his subjects were loyal, and these the Master of his fate, the Captain of his soul, ruled like a despotic—but benevolent—monarch.

XXXIX

THE CURTAIN FALLS

"WHEN do you fellows paint?" asked one, who in Rome for the past forty years has enjoyed the tranquillity necessary to accomplish much and notable work; "whenever I come over here you are busy on juries for an exhibition, or forwarding some scheme to enable *other* fellows to paint." This is unfortunately true of many men who have no stronger desire than to sit quietly in their studios and work; but of those who escape this vicarious service, Theodore Robinson was a shining example. He rightfully felt that his little physical strength should be consecrated to his personal effort, and though at times he served, cheerfully enough, on the jury of the Society of American Artists, he flitted between this country and France, his chief activity bent to his own production. So quietly did he come and go, so absorbed was he in his work, that, except to his intimates, he seemed less like a sentient being than a name; a name which, at every recurrent exhibition, was attached to works singularly personal, fresh and attractive. This freedom from controlling circumstance enabled him to see much of his few friends and to keep between us, to the last, all of the easy intimacies of our student days which, claimed by other duties, I might have found more difficult to retain. Accustomed to his coming unannounced and

Theodore Robinson

departing without warning, I had thought nothing of his not appearing at our house for a week or ten days when, on the afternoon of April 2, 1896, a messenger summoned me from my work with the news of his sudden death. A friend, who was also his physician, had seen him in the morning, Robinson protesting against his ministrations that he was simply suffering from a mild attack of the asthma to which he was subject, a diagnosis in which the physician concurred—and half an hour after he had expired, as a candle, burning brightly down to its socket, flickers and goes out. A delicate, sensitive artist, receptive to the beauty of atmosphere and limpid play of light over the face of nature, he had no greater preoccupation, in his last years, than to find in the land of his birth a country side that was as inspiring to his work as his well-loved Valley of the Seine. Some strain of Puritan conscience, a desire to identify himself with his native land, was his impelling motive and by this strain, by evident atavism, he was brought to return to his birthplace, to the hills of Vermont, from whence he had been taken in his infancy, and there had found his ideal country. The last time we spoke together he was planning, after a first summer's experience, to return there and looking forward to work that should be filled with the contentment of an attained desire, when it was otherwise ordered.

Naturally, the myriad occupations of the busy man in New York had limited the occasions on which I met Saint-Gaudens during these years. In the important position to which he had attained his hours of leisure were even fewer than mine, but it is pleasant to remem-

ber now, there was never a moment during these busiest hours of his life when at the call of a friend, especially if the service demanded was his assistance in solving some knotty problem of art, he would not leave his work and answer the appeal. This I have known him to do for students struggling with a first work as conscientiously and almost as cheerfully as for an intimate friend. These indeed knew with what unquenchable enthusiasm he would enter into their artistic projects, with what fraternal interest he would bend his mind to help them with sapient counsel; and knew, above all, with what unswerving frankness he would destroy any lingering doubt, if they rightly suspected that their work had gone wrong.

An instance incidental to my own work will best explain the helpful quality of his criticism. I had nearly finished a decorative panel, one of a series designed for a room in the Louis XV style. After the engaging manner of this period, my composition comprised two young people in the costume of the time; a young woman, a sheet of music held in her hands, reclining, partly supported against the trunk of a tree, and at her side a young gallant playing the flute, his head thrown back as he steals a furtive glance at the music—or the damsel.

All had gone fairly well with the exception of the head of the young man, and there I encountered a subtle difficulty, which in vain I essayed to overcome. It did not appear to be a fault of drawing, colour, or, so far as I could discover, of expression; but nevertheless, the head was wrong in some way which repainting it three or four times, and puzzling my brain

until it was fairly addled, did not remedy. In this juncture I sent forth a cry of distress to Saint-Gaudens, who hastened to the rescue. I explained my difficulty, whose existence he cheerfully confirmed, and then we sat before my canvas and pondered. "Is the head badly drawn, is it out of construction, out of plane in the picture?" To these queries he returned a negative. At last, after some little time, he said: "I think I have it; your head is not *Louis quinze*, no, it's not a question of type, that is right enough, but of expression. Don't you remember how they were not only not serious in all the art of the time, but they were *knowing;* that is, they always appear to be aware that they are not *real* milkmaids and shepherdesses, but are masquerading." "But that is exactly what I have tried for," I expostulated, "that is the reason why I have thrown my youth's eyes up in a fine frenzy, and exaggerated the sentimentality of his look." "Exactly, you have made him *romantic;* now the Renaissance could be romantic, at times as romantic as Delacroix was later; but the *Louis quinze*, never. Try lowering his eyelids so that he looks through them, slyly, at the lady; all *Louis quinze* art is *un peu polisson*, and see if that won't do it."

No sooner said than done, a few minutes' work effected the change and presto! the panel was saved.

Criticism as helpful and intelligent as this an artist rarely receives from a comrade, so engrossed do we become with our own personal point of view, and it also is somewhat curious that of those to whom my gratitude for such service is chiefly due, I fancy that I could count them on the fingers of my two hands, the

most inspiring, salutory and catholic were sculptors, Gaudez and Saint-Gaudens.

Saint-Gaudens was as solicitous and receptive of criticism as he was liberal in the consideration of others' work. Some of us fancied that he was too receptive and learned to forbear from suggesting changes in his work; for, otherwise, a tentative suggestion might be enlarged upon, by his sensitive desire to essay every possible modification of his effort, and the work of weeks would be destroyed before the horrified eyes of a friend, before a sober second thought could confirm or possibly condemn, to the critic's mind, the suggested change. With methods of work like this, every one of his numerous and varied productions may be said to represent many times the actual expenditure of time and effort that the definite work demanded, and each statue or relief was in the truest sense a survival of the fittest.

Sculpture produced under these conditions demands expenditure of more than time and effort, and I listened without surprise when Saint-Gaudens gave, among the reasons for his return to Paris, in the autumn of 1897, that of greater economy of production than was possible in New York, and confessed that, despite his constant employment and the generous retribution of his work in the sixteen years that had elapsed since his return from Europe, his labours had brought him little pecuniary profit.

There were other reasons as well. His position here was not altogether exempt from the "splendid isolation of genius"; for, be it said, without depreciation of others among his contemporaries, painters as well as

The Flute

Dessus de Porte by W. H. Low, in the music-room of the residence of the late Charles T. Yerkes, New York

sculptors, his is the first instance of one of our artists whose active professional life has been passed at home, and the merit of whose work is directly based upon our national life, who has won world-wide fame.

His modesty would not have acknowledged this; but, in the three years which he passed abroad, critical opinion in Europe accepted him as a master, and France bestowed upon him the highest honours at her disposition.

Perhaps the strongest impelling motive for his departure at the time was an intuitive desire to affront a tribunal of different, if not higher, standards than those of his own formulation, and those to which he most frequently appealed among his comrades at home, for he was of the generation and training that owes so much to France, men who, to the end of their days, must yield her homage as to their *alma mater*.

I cannot better describe the result of this return to Paris than in transcribing one of his letters, written in a careless and familiar vein, that gives it autobiographical value, in presenting a truthfully self-drawn portrait of the man.

"3 *bis*, RUE DE BAGNEUX, PARIS,
"*September* 2, 1898.

"DEAR OLD FELLOW:

"I received your letter yesterday to my great and joyous surprise; surprise as great as you will experience on receiving this prompt response, but absence from home makes frequent correspondence *with* home a *sine qua non*, and Fridays are the days I devote to that (to me) laborious task. To-day is Friday, and what is more it is a wonderful American autumn day, one of those languorous, sumptuous, golden days we

have at home; and it recalls the other side so much that this business of writing has turned into an orgy of correspondence with old friends. With the exception of a week of real New York heat this summer has been glorious, and I have revelled in it, after a winter dark and miserable beyond description. It rained steadily for eight months, and I have come to the conclusion that I am made of stiffer and better stuff than I thought, to have held out here through it all. I have been miserably blue and homesick in the beginning of my stay here; beyond reason, in fact, I found so much that I disliked intensely which I expected to like immensely, that I plunged into work moodily and with set teeth. The only relief was at the end of the day emerging from the streets to the river, the quays, and across the bridges; rain or shine it was always inspiring and a contrast to dark thoughts; the big open sky with the great effects of clouds.

"And now 'winter is made glorious summer (I haven't Shakespeare by me to quote rightly) and the world seems different.' But, '*on n'est jamais content.*' It's the fine weather now that makes me want to go back, it recalls America so vividly.

"This coming here has been a great experience, surprising in many respects, one thing being how much of an American I find I am. I always thought I was a kind of cosmopolitan, gelatinous fish; *pas du tout;* I belong in America, that is my home, that is where I want to be and remain; elevated railway dropping oil and ashes on the idiots below, cable cars, telegraph poles, sky-line and all have become dear to me, to say nothing of things many, many more times attractive; friends,

the scenery, the smell of the earth, and the days like to-day; the peculiar smell of America, just as peculiar as the smell of Italy or France.

"Another thing (I'm rattling on about myself, but I know it will interest you) is the view I now have of my work. Up to my visit here I felt as if I was working in a fog, I knew not 'where I was at.' That is all dispelled, and now I see my ground clearly; I feel myself well planted and know where to strike. A strange feeling of cockiness and confidence that I never have felt, and which (oh, irony!) may mean that I am *losing* ground. And a respect for what we are doing at home, too, a great respect; in fact, I shall return a burning hot-headed patriot. What a place this is over here, though! Seductive as a beautiful woman with her smiles; I suppose that when I get back I will want to return here again; '*on n'est jamais content*,' as I have previously remarked.

"I have just returned from a trip to Holland and Belgium. Haarlem and Amsterdam remind me startlingly of many of the habits and customs of the New York of my boyhood; an attractive lot of people, too. A trip to England also made a formidable impression, favourable, on me, but you know all about that country. I didn't and I'm looking forward to another visit there and to Scotland next month; when I go to Edinboro', to see about the memorial to Stevenson which I have been asked to do.

"I am pegging away at the Sherman. If I am to believe what has been said to me, and of me to others, about my work at the Salon, and the articles in the papers, my stuff was liked. Perhaps that's the reason

I've been so cocky. There's an article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* for August about my things that will give you the keynote of the critics and another in "*Art et Décoration*," the swell publication here, they tell me, and then there's a lot of other stuff in other papers.

"Garnier * is still my dear old friend of yore, the same wit, the same charming simple way of looking at things. I see little of him, however, as he now lives in a little nest not far from Chartres. We went to Italy together, though; and it was a great treat to have him along, to find ourselves walking along the roads of the South of France, cane in hand, precisely as we did thirty years ago in the Jura. We visited the village where my father was born, in a glorious spot in the Pyrenees, about twenty miles from the frontier of Spain. To go there was like quenching a great thirst, for it had been my desire for twenty years. But Italy, Italy, give me Rome. The walks we took there were like dreams of Paradise, and some day you must go there, too. I mean Rome, Naples, and the road on the Mediterranean from Amalfi to Salerno.

"The sun is going down, and I must close this letter otherwise I'll put you off to finish it at leisure—and will never find it again. It has been a pleasure to write to you, and, whenever the spirit moves, send me another letter. I think I will stay here this winter visiting Spain and Greece, and next fall end up in America. Give my love to your wife, grip the paws of all the *camarades*, and believe me,

"Faithfully your friend as ever,

"Augustus Saint-Gaudens."

* One of our old Paris comrades.

Other letters followed, as frank and self-revealing as is this, each tempered by his appreciation of the sterling qualities of the French, in their sane outlook on life and their recognition of art as one of its component parts, and each penetrated with a longing for home and interest in our new conditions, in which he and his work bore so constructive a part.

Thus of a friend, to whom I had given him a letter of introduction, and for a second time had been enabled to bring two sympathetic natures into communion, he writes: "He has all the charming side of the French . . . the clearness of vision, the thoroughness and conscientiousness of work, and withal the power of enjoying life; *la joie de vivre*—which is their one note that has not staled by custom in the two years I have been here. I have grown to like it here very much, *reste à voir*, how I will like the coming winter . . . I propose staying until after the Exposition (1900) opens and then I shall go home with a glad heart; for, after all, we are creatures of habit and twenty years habit of New York and New Yorkers, cannot be broken by two years of alluring Paris. The Esquimaux hies back to his ice hut in the Arctic circle; and why shouldn't I? to the place where I have such bully friends who are bully men—though they have done well by me here, as you know."

Something of this double loyalty to two countries, a willingness to play a merely passive part but to profit by long established conditions and bask in the sunshine of the afternoon of art to mitigate the chill of its early morning on these shores, led me about this time to project a protracted sojourn in Europe. My visits

there since 1886 had been of short duration; and, in each instance, a mere transference of the activities of work from one side of the ocean to the other. This visit was to be different, a leisurely progress through Italy, from Naples to the North, and in Paris a reunion with Saint-Gaudens, Gaudez and others of my friends, who fortunately may not figure here since, man proposing and hope springing eternal, other projected meetings may still take place.

Of all this holiday proposition no one feature possessed such promise of pleasure, as a plan to establish ourselves in some quiet country place in France, and there lure Bob Stevenson to share with us some semblance of the life of our youth at Fontainebleau. He was not consulted in the matter; correspondence with him having been abandoned by this time as a custom impossible to maintain, but I knew by past experience that I had only to come upon him unawares to resume our relation at the precise point of its last interruption. I knew also that it was his habit to pass a portion of the summer away from London with his little family, and that often this holiday took them to France. Consequently the choice of the scene of this revival and prolongation of youth was to be theirs, though we secretly hoped that some of the villages around Fontainebleau would be chosen.

So far had man proposed, when there was flashed across the ocean the news of the death of Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, in London, 18th April, 1900, in his fifty-fourth year. This was shortly followed by a letter, from his wife to mine, in which occurs this passage: "Will you tell Mr. Low that if anything is to be

written about Bob in America, it is my great wish that he should do it. Nobody knew Bob better and there were few Bob loved more sincerely."

Here in these pages, after many years, still conscious of the shadow of his loss, I have endeavoured to give some picture of the man. Elusive and baffling as may seem such glimpses as I have given to those who never heard his voice, partial and fragmentary as will appear the faces I have shown of the many-faceted reflections of his mind to those who knew him, no word has been written without an abiding sense of the usefulness of his career. A just sense of humanity caused, long ago, an epilogue to be added to a famous fable of Jean de la Fontaine, in which the dove intervenes at the conclusion of the dialogue at the point where the author left it, where the ant informs the grasshopper that, having sang all the summer, now that winter is come she may dance. The humane—and intelligent—dove thereupon offers the musician of the fields "grains at her choice"; and then proceeds to read the avaricious ant a much-needed lesson, concluding:

> Vous travaillez à toute heure; elle chante dans les moissons;
> Ainsi, tous nous remplissons la tâche que Dieu nous impose.

In the welter of a great capital, amid the hum of traffic and the insensate struggle of the ambitious, impelled by who knows what mysterious force that kept him in touch yet apart from every passion of the age, accepting the common lot and earning the wage of self-sustenance—and nothing more—it was my friend's "God given task" to sing in the harvest of art and letters, that others garnered. If he were less than these

the story of Mary and Martha, the parable of the "lilies of the field," have been writ in vain; for his counsel has cleared many a doubt, his appreciation has cheered many to sustained effort, and, above all, be it remembered, as William Ernest Henley has so truthfully testified, his influence was, "ever, I may insist, an influence for the best, alike in morals and in art."

Again Fate had intervened; the best-laid plans of the summer were impoverished of their crowning riches, and some tinge of sadness was ever present, as we slowly made our way through the enchanted land of art from Naples to Paris, at the thought that by this intervention Bob was indeed, "removed beyond the touch of friendship." Further disappointment awaited us in Paris, for on our arrival there we learned that Saint-Gaudens had left but a few days before for America, and alarm was added to regret, when we knew that he was so seriously ill that he was accompanied upon the voyage by a physician. More than a year before I had known of his serious illness, an aggravated case of nervous prostration out of which he had come with a shudder of memory that impelled him to write: "I pity from the bottom of my heart many whom I looked upon before as *malades imaginaires*."

The menace of the trouble that had caused his sudden departure was even more grave, and was, in fact, the premonitory attack of the malady against which he struggled with such high courage until the end came seven years after. I may say here, that our first alarm was somewhat allayed by news that came from home, that surgical skill had apparently triumphed, and that Saint-Gaudens was on the high-road

to complete recovery, the first of the mocking hopes that reassured his friends, and gave him temporary belief that he had vanquished his enemy. Thus reassured we could turn to other friends, many of whom the friendly capital harboured.

I find that in speaking of two visits to Europe, in 1892–1895, I have said nothing of my early mentor and steadfast friend, Adrien Gaudez. This apparent neglect is simply a case like that of happy nations having little history. On each of these visits we had been much together, and in his house and garden at Neuilly, in company with Madame Gaudez and *la petite Adrienne*, we had passed many happy hours. In a modest way he had been exceptionally fortunate, the list of his works and their retributive honours had grown, and in character he had remained the same wise and witty friend who looked on life with approval and upon art with a catholic and sane appreciation. We had always kept up an intermittent correspondence, but at the time of this last visit I was in arrears by more than a year, having counted upon an earlier visit to Paris to enable me to drop in unannounced, to take the place which he and his were always good enough to reserve for their friends *d'outre-mer*.

When, following this habit of sudden apparition, I entered his presence I was again to encounter the unexpected. There was no change in the nature of my friend, but he whom I had left so alert five years before, of whose continued physical well being his last letter had assured me, I now found stretched upon a *chaise-longue*, prone on his back, a victim of nephritis. There was no one that I have known who seemed less likely

to be physically incapacitated than Gaudez. To the Bacchus-like grace of his earlier years had succeeded the full-blooded sturdiness of middle life, the *charpente* that has carried a number of his compatriots, brother-artists, beyond four score in full vigour of life and production.

But for nearly a year, as I learned to my sorrow, my friend had been unable to walk or stand, and it was indescribably pathetic so see him in the studio surrounded by his larger works, one group only half finished, while he, to occupy his time and divert the tedium of inaction was reduced to model, on a small stand contrived to serve him as he sat half reclining, little figurines, or sketches for works of greater mould which he bravely hoped to undertake, "when he got well."

I should not linger over this last phase of my friend's life, tormented as it was by acute pain and menaced in its material fortune,—for the security of his modest prosperity had been purchased by uninterrupted labour and was ill-calculated to withstand a long and expensive illness,—but for the superb courage, cheerfulness, and hope which sustained him to the last, when fortunately the final blow came quickly and painlessly.

Our stay in France was lengthened to eighteen months and during that time, whenever I was in or within reach of Paris, my visits were frequent to the studio in Neuilly which, less gay than during the light-hearted labours of Gaudez, saw decreasingly few visitors. Except for the steady encroachment of his malady, which all but him were forced to acknowledge, the daily life there led was in spirit little changed. The spirit of a pagan philosopher looking the future full in

the face with only negligent curiosity as to what it held in store, but extracting every element of pleasure from the immediate occurrences of the day, controlled my friend, and in his presence, dominated those about him. Carried out to his garden, surrounded by the tangle of poppies, larkspur and lilies, reclining in the sunshine and discoursing with fine optimism of life and art, it was easy to imagine a reincarnation of Epicurus teaching in an earlier garden his doctrine, devoid of the debasement with which our modern materialism has tarnished the fair fame of the Greek philosopher.

Above all, returns to me the memory of the eve of our departure home. A young and enthusiastic doctor, a pupil of Pasteur, with a new treatment and confident prognostication, had spread the hope of his recovery beyond the limit of Gaudez' own serene certitude. His couch had been moved to the side of the dinner table, the repast finished he had lighted his faithful pipe and, in view of our imminent departure, he was looking forward to the time of our next visit.

"I will be on my feet then, and we must no longer put off our excursion to my native Burgundy at the time of the vintage. We have planned to do this for many years and it is an experience that must be undertaken when one is still valiant, for my relatives and friends among the *vignerons* are sinners for hospitality. There I will show you, *espèce de vieux classique*, young girls treading out the grapes as they have done since the time of Horace, and a life that is so patriarchal and generous that it subsists nowhere to-day save in this blessed province of Burgundy." Later our talk turned on the survival of interest in work outlasting the hope

of realization of youthful ambition; and, beyond the wreaths of smoke, my friendly oracle spoke his final message. "It is the compensation that years bring. Many of our projects of youth we come to see were futile, and in their place comes the desire to do some little thing well, not for applause or reward, but for the satisfaction of our proper conscience. And that brings contentment. *Tiens*, take my own case, I have put by most of the dreams of my youth, but I have a happy family, a pleasant home here, and an agreeable little box at the seaside for the mid-summer. I have been permitted to do my own work in my own way, with sufficient success to promise continuous work for the future. If it were not for these passing twinges of pain"—and for a moment I could trace the paroxysm, which passing, his face resumed its serenity; and he continued—"I could say that I am absolutely happy and contented."

It was but a few weeks after, following our return to America, that we learned that in the full tide of continued hope, this gentle generous spirit had been taken, suddenly and painlessly, from the world which he had adorned by his presence, and from the art of his country, to which, in the Nymphe Echo, he has left a masterwork.

XL

RETROSPECT AND FORECAST

FRIENDSHIP is a hardy perennial and, in the sequence of the seasons, among the chequered spaces of sunlight and shadow, of sorrow and mirth, new blooms arise from the ashes of the past. With Louis gone, the earth bereft of Bob's brave presence, witnessing the slow and torturing progress of the gradual dissolution of Gaudez, and only half reassured that the days of Saint-Gaudens were not numbered, the long-awaited vacation in my second *patrie* would have been hopelessly overshadowed, but for the presence of other friends—who, happily, survive—and, above all, had not a closer intimacy grown, by the side of these *fleurs du mal*, from a friendship which in truth had taken root some years before, but which now grew and flourished.

Its story may not be told here—my story, indeed, is almost done—but, from a sorrow greater than ours, rose the duty of sympathy and the bestowal of the small measure of consolation that one can bring to others in affliction. To share elemental and mutual helpfulness over the rough places of life lessens the burden laid upon each of us. The fortunate artist has, as an added gift, moreover, a panacea for all ills in the work in which his sentient personality is absorbed until he becomes, as it were, an atom of the forces of nature, whose gradual evolution he shares to some extent, and, as the hours of endeavour follow one an-

other, emerges from night to day, from the chill of winter to the promise of spring.

This miracle I have seen oft repeated in life, as I now saw it come to a flower-bedecked garden overlooking a smiling valley and bring to those assembled there peace, though not forgetfulness.

At this point my chronicle has covered the quarter of a century, and though purposely I have limited its recital to the more obvious and superficial happenings of these years and have never entertained for a moment the thought of presenting a full and faithful history of the lives of the men who figure here during this period, I have found that memory has yielded a greater store of these inconsequential events than I anticipated at the outset. Having, therefore, long ago exceeded the original limit of my undertaking, I must, with this chapter, cease my garrulity, hoping only that I have justified the promise of my preface and that my recital "is one where events, if not more prominent than opinions and beliefs, have, nevertheless, the weight of actualities as ballast."

In this harvest of my memories the task of separating the wheat from the chaff has presented the chief, I might say the only, difficulty. For, with each episode that has recurrently risen from the past others of perhaps equal importance, if any of them may be considered important, have come in their company. To pick and choose the incidents, the conversations, the letters, the theories advanced or the beliefs confessed that were germane to my desire to portray truthfully, if partially, my friends, has been difficult. All else has been easy: for, writing *currente calamo*, I have sat like an amanu-

ensis following the dictation of my departed youth, listening, reflectively, to the voice of "*le poëte mort jeune, à qui l'homme survit.*"

The surviving man indeed fancies himself facing future difficulties when these pages are given to the public. For those of my comrades gone, the revelation of their opinions and theories, of the speculations in which we liberally indulged, and which as intimates, were shared between us, may add something to the interest which they in their lives excited. That the surviving narrator, in the execution of his pious task—in his desire to add verity to his story and to fill the gaps in the history of his friends—should be equally frank concerning himself, is a more debatable question.

To him, so long as Fate permits, is reserved the necessity of walking familiar streets, of pursuing the humdrum activities of daily life in company with those among whom he has theretofore been inconspicuous, to take up, after an excursion along the primrose way of youth, the heavier-footed journey of advancing age, in a city, in a time, and under a social system which is notably indifferent, when it is not exultantly irreverential, to recondite questions of art and life, over which he has complacently lingered. When one has cheerfully accepted the conditions of life as he has found it, has turned a new face and new effort to every demand born of circumstance, and has, in a word, endeavoured to fulfill the duties of a citizen of our great, if sometimes disconcerting, republic, it surely is permissible to stop a while, in (what he would fain believe to be) mid-career, to register memories which have no pretence to be memoirs. Memoirs by their very nature are addressed

to posterity, while these desultory pages disclaim any such dubious destination, in the hope of finding contemporary favour, and are written by one who has merely abandoned, for a space, another and more chosen task, in order that these brave lives that he has known might be made somewhat nearer and more real to their surviving fellows.

Into this tissue of interwoven memories, if its texture be not too frail, or its pattern too diffuse, I would still weave in clearer colours, working, as the artificer must, behind his design, yet knowing clearly the result he would achieve in his tapestry, the moral which runs through its warp and woof—the moral of courage.

The men of whom I have written were loved of the gods. No one of them reached his sixtieth birthday and, as each was cut down in the zenith of his power, it is certain that had longer life been granted him his best work would have been increased in quantity, while it is possible that the ultimate quality of his production was, by this decree of destiny, denied expression. One and all had premonitory warning of their approaching end, yet faced this limited future, clear-eyed, with courage unabashed, working till the last, not from a sense of placating Fate by accomplishment of duty or with trembling haste, lest the day be done ere the task were finished, but with the complete absorption and full enjoyment of the artist steadfastly creating, changing and perfecting his conception, as though he had eternity before him.

With Louis Stevenson, Robinson, Eaton, Henley, and in the last seven years of his life, Saint-Gaudens, the body which encased this brave spirit was as frail as

Gaudez and la petite Adrienne in the garden—1892

their devotion to their work was constant, and their continued activity followed its cheerful course; burdened by physical pain, when not menaced by imminent death. Gaudez suffering acutely, his great frame racked, and in the intervals of relief "happy and contented," modelling his sketches for works he was not to live to achieve; Henley sitting stoically, refusing an anæsthetic while the surgeon plied his knife, clenching his teeth on his pipe, and composing, perchance, a "Hospital Verse"; or Homer Martin, more than half blind in his last days, yet by the magic of his art endowing a small square of woven linen with the luminosity of which nature had imparted to him the secret, these were courageous men.

It was of such as these that Stevenson wrote in "Æs Triplex"—every line of which applies so truly to himself:

"A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world."

It is to be noted, moreover, that but two of these men rose to high honour and enjoyed the fruits of their labour and the opportunity for consecutive effort during their lifetime. To the others the world remained simply tolerant, when not hostile, and whatever posthumous honour has since covered their names atones but little for the hard struggle and the necessary compromise for self-sustenance, which impeded the full fruition of their power.

We have little conception in this country, nor, indeed, does there exist in the public mind anywhere in the world, an adequate comprehension of the infinite

pains, the sedulous hours of labour that go to the making of a work of art. Balzac's figure of "the miner buried in a landslip," Flaubert's reiterated notation of manuscript pages destroyed for the paragraph he retained, Stevenson's own practice for that matter, can all be paralleled in the production of the painter and sculptor. There is no particular virtue in this for the "labour we delight in physics pain"; but, to go through life and speak to deaf ears, to paint or model for eyes that allot, at the most, an indifferent glance to the consideration of art, and still keep inviolate a high purpose and an unrelenting effort demands sustained courage.

It was such courage, upheld only by the approval of a minority of their craft, that impelled Corot, Millet, Puvis de Chavannes, and a host of others notable in the long history of art, to continued effort until their heads were whitened, before the clouds that had obscured their path broke away, and a random ray of the sun which now shines so refulgently upon their names, cheered the evening of their lives.

These were the successful men of art, but upon the others—to those who see the night descend upon a day of impeded labour and are taken away before the returning sun shows clearly how well their work was done—or upon even those whose gifts are small—the same high mandate of continuous effort is laid.

For success in the arts, concurrent to the life of the artist, is apparently a matter of circumstance, except where, as I would willingly affirm, the existence of certain gifted beings is so necessary to the world that circumstance has long before prepared for their advent. It seems certain that had not Louis Stevenson's frail

life been protected from his birth by every safeguard that affection and comparative affluence could bring to bear, he would, had he escaped death in infancy, never have known the years of his apprenticeship and the grateful conditions of material comfort under which he was permitted, and encouraged by criticism and approbation, to perfect his effort and give nothing to the world that was not his best.

Equally predestinate seems the advent of Augustus Saint-Gaudens to the time and place of his labours, though here no material prosperity made easy the years of his apprenticeship, and indeed the hardships of his student days may have counted against him at the last.

For, perhaps more than any of those whose natures I have essayed to partially describe here, he was essentially and wholly the artist. He knew no interest that did not contribute to his art, and, receptive to the utmost degree to the manifold influences of life and of nature, swayed by these emotions to the inner core of his being as a true Celt, their vibration within him was at once transmuted to the music of art under the more orderly hand of the Latin.

Without thought of its application to our friend, in continuance of our life-long discussion of art and the artist, Stevenson wrote in one of his last letters, in response to some optimistic prophecy of mine:

"Well, it may be there is a good time coming: and I wonder, when it comes, whether it will be a time of little, exclusive, one-eyed rascals, like you and me, or parties of the old stamp who can paint and fight, and write and keep books of double entry, and sculp and scalp. It might be. You have a lot of stuff in your

kettle, and a great deal of it Celtic, and the Celtic blood makes a rare blend for art. If it is stiffened up with Latin blood you get the French. However, that is a good starting point, and with all the other elements in your crucible, it may come to something great very easily."

This child of the Celt and the Latin brought when a babe to this land, growing up in close touch with the people of its greatest city, living the life of its streets through his most impressionable age, at a period when from a fratricidal war uprose a united country, sharing in purely intuitive fashion its passions and its hopes and, from this immersion in the stormy waters of a great epoch, laved of all alien strain, emerging, rebaptized, an American, such was Saint-Gaudens.

When he returned to these shores, a man of thirty, fresh from the apprenticeship of his art among his kindred French, among whom once more he had become scarce distinguishable, opportunity awaited him; and, as he grasped her hand his pulses tingled, and from that moment to the end of his life he was utterly consecrated to the service of his country as a loyal son of America. It is seldom that historic epochs yield an immediate harvest to the art and literature of a people. The great epic of our internecine strife is yet to be written, but, when the greater resulting benefits of those years of anguish—the union of our people, the manumission of the slave—have become so thoroughly welded into our national life that the conditions existing before the Civil War may appear mere shadowy traditions, there will remain to us, it is permissible to believe, certain fragments of our literature that were the fruit of that great epoch.

Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg, the Commemoration Ode of James Russell Lowell, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," by Julia Ward Howe, and Walt Whitman's "Captain, O, my Captain," seem destined to thus survive and thrill our hearts for all time. With these there remain in imperishable bronze three noble works; the Lincoln standing with bent head, a great and homely figure, before the Chair of State; the Sherman advancing to war—war that is hell—preceded by Victory with swinging step, bearing the palm of triumph, and the youth, Shaw, leading a subject race to their freedom and his death.

These are the works of this child of mingled strain, these are the offerings that this great American laid upon the altar of his country.

To those of us that knew him, the men of his generation, there rises above the memory of the fraternal sympathy of which he was so lavish, even above the meed of admiration which his work inspires, a proud sense in which the humblest member of his craft may share, that in Saint-Gaudens we possessed, as an example of a noble aspiration of man, a typical artist. For he was more than a sculptor. During his life there were those who failed to grasp the full significance of his art, and since his death, as usual upon the eve of a canonization, the Devil's Advocate lifts his voice and suggests that tried by the canons of the Greeks, his sculpture would be found wanting. So much may be granted at this probationary period, without abating in the slightest degree the high honour that, for our time and for our purposes, we would accord our greatest artist.

There is a type of sculpture, that in the Hellenic age

—and never since—became vital and responsive, embodying the beliefs and reëchoing the aspirations of an earlier time and another people than ours. These perfect works are carved from monoliths and remain in their largeness of form, their reticence of gesture and their voluntary simplicity of aspect closely allied to the cube from which they are wrought. They are the work of Titans who met on terms of equality the gods and demi-gods, into whose images they infused a spirit before which we tremble—but may not aspire to imitate. When sculpture had its rebirth in a Christian era, it took upon itself at once a character more human and a guise far more complex. Donatello again carved his men of stone, but they no longer bore the impress of their marmorean cradle, gesture became freer, compositions more involved, and the marble under his touch became more plastic, as he embroidered his theme according to his freer fantasy. Even the hand that "wrought in sad sincerity," felt his marble pulsate and escape the limit of the cube and the great "Dawn" and "Twilight" suggest these more human limitations. For these men and those that follow after are no longer impeccable in their technical knowledge. It is with genuine human sympathy, and recognition of the frailty inherent in man, that we can approach their works, and acknowledge their greatness, despite the comforting reservation that they fail to attain the perfection of the Greek. Michael Angelo is brought nearer to us as we note before his "Slave," in the Louvre, that, mastered by the emotion of his conception, he committed an error of measurement and, the cube from which he fashioned his palpitating figure proving too small to

entirely contain it, the proportion of half his statue has consequently suffered.

A sane judgment untinctured by personal affection—a manner of consideration which he so strikingly enforced in his relations with his artist-friends—would place the works of Saint-Gaudens in this latter category of an art essentially human, carrying its message to all men of its time and environment. And, under the guidance of his unerring taste, the resource of his technical ability, and the underlying nobility of his purpose, it appeals to the best that is in us.

This surely is high praise for a master in an art as young as ours, and his achievement constitutes a precious inheritance for a people so recently released from the primary necessity of felling our forests and clearing our fields, in order that we may take rank among civilized nations, to deserve and acquire an art of our own.

We may, therefore, cheerfully concede that the spirit of our first great sculptor has little in common with that which called into being the demi-gods of the Greek Pantheon—though here arises the memory of the austere and placid figure that guards the tomb in Washington, which claims some parentage with these, though again some part of the riddle of her enigmatic presence is propounded in our common language—for surely her problems are questions of our time? But this figure stands apart in his work and for the most part, technically and in expression, his sculpture is the last in the line of progression from the revivified art of Donatello. I have said that he was more than sculptor, I could almost gratify his detractors by agreeing that his art was not sculpture; at least, within the circumscribed

limits where they are willing to confine the noble art. For Saint-Gaudens treated his clay as the painter handles his colours. The material was plastic, almost fluid, in his hands, and, until the rigid bronze fixed its contours and immobilized its masses, there was no limit to the changes to which it was subjected in the pursuit of an ideal that should perfectly express his mastering emotion—an ideal as unattained, possibly, to his perception as those that elude the grasp of all artists, but embodying for us a result singularly rich and varied in expression. To some degree this method of work is not unusual, for he is a faint-hearted artist who will hesitate to put an evident amelioration of his work to the touch—"to win or lose it all";—but, carried to the point that Saint-Gaudens did, it constitutes a technical method that is both peculiar and individual. In the hands of a lesser man it might have denoted vacillation, but to those who have been privileged to follow his work, step by step, from the primary conception to the completed monument, I fancy that there is not one who will deny that the end justified the means. With all the pictorial sense that makes his work grateful to the painter, his taste was too correct, his command of the technical methods of the sculptor too thorough, to overstep the boundary of the sister art. He had a full appreciation of the interdependence of sculpture, painting, and architecture, in a decorative sense, and few have so wisely profited by the alliance of their work with architectural adjuncts as he; while, in his reliefs especially, he is as much indebted to delicately drawn and beautifully spaced ornament as were the painters of Florence who graduated from the studios of the

jewellers. But all this charm of the embroidered surface, the complex folds of the flower-engirdled draperies he loved so well, the enrichment of the planes of his relief backgrounds or his pedestals by cunningly devised inscription or symbolic ornament, were all subsidiary to the mass and weight of the strongly modelled heads, the graceful stalwart or characteristic figures that embodied the impression he desired to convey. A few years ago I stood in the sculpture gallery of the Luxembourg, in Paris, in the company of a French artist whose opinions, from long experience of their value, I have learned to respect. We stood before Saint-Gaudens's relief, "Amor Caritas," and, from a desire to add confirmation to my own high appreciation of its beauty, I was led to quote the disparaging opinion of a third friend, a sculptor, who insisted that, tried by the canons to which sculpture should adhere, it was not sculpture.

"Well," was the rejoinder of my friend, "look around us. Here is a gallery filled with modern sculpture, some of it living, and some of it dead. The greater part shows technical ability of a high order, but how infrequently the quality of expression is of equal import, and how few of these well modelled figures show a definite conception, how few that we cannot trace back to some previous work. Here is a work pregnant with meaning; of a symbolism that appeals to all; that is novel and personal in its presentation; whose *facture* we hardly consider, so appropriate are the technical methods suited to its theme. Our friend denies that it is sculpture, it may be something better; it is individual, it is beautiful, beyond dispute it is Art."

The last seven years of the life of this great artist were passed in a beautiful country in his much-loved home at Cornish, N. H. Here in ample studios, aided by his pupil-assistants, his production was carried on, in the intervals of encroaching malady and absolute physical prostration, with no loss of the ardour with which men like him work to the last. In his rare visits to New York we saw Saint-Gaudens, ill beyond denial or concealment, but as courageous and as interested in his friends as ever. Scarce a year has passed since we sat together, and, endowed by all his old-time vividness of recital he described the humours of an official reception in a manner that brought to life a varied and amusing scene through which passed characteristic figures, living also by a word, or a characteristic gesture. Of one of these, a Persian diplomat, he made an inimitable caricature, giving it especially an eye in which lurked all the impenetrable mystery of the Orient; and, five minutes after, he was deep in a forecast of future work and description of that which he had under way: in spirit as young, hopeful, and buoyant as when, for the first time, he knocked at my door at 81 Boulevard Mont Parnasse, thirty years before.

. . . . . .

We dwelt on Mount Parnassus at the outset of my story, and one by one I have seen vanish in its shadow many of my comrades of that time. Others still toil along the ascent led by the light that hovers at its summit, and the effort to maintain a footing along the slopes of the Hill Difficult—but enchanting—lends a zest to life and joy to their labour until the day, re-

mote or near, when, in some sacred wood dear to the Arts and the Muses, they may, together with those gone before, listen to the fluting of Pan and breathe once more the airs of their youth.

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